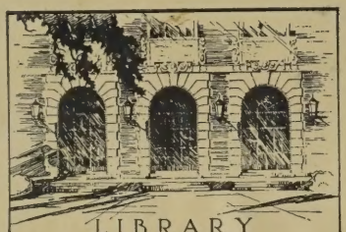

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MODERN ART

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Text by CHARLES MARRIOTT and "TIS."

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MODERN ART.

By CHARLES MARRIOTT.

Chapter I.

A WORKING definition of art must be based upon art, not as it might be in ideal conditions, but as it is and has been in the history of the world. This needs the sacrifice of many preferences and prejudices, and even the temporary disregard of some principles. But it does not mean lowering the standard of criticism. On the contrary, it means keeping it up; that we agree to disregard our principles rather than tamper with them, to broaden our definition of art rather than flatter examples to make them square with it.

There is a story of Whistler that may be used in illustration. Whistler was in a hatter's, having his hat ironed, when a fussy stranger, seeing him bareheaded, mistook him for the shopman.

"I got this here yesterday," said the stranger, waggling his own hat upon his head, "and look at it!"

"Well, what's the matter with it?" said Whistler.

"Can't you see?" said the stranger. "It doesn't fit."

"Shouldn't worry," said Whistler, looking him up and down; "none of your clothes fit."

So a working definition of art will cover many works that are not worthy of the name; because, if it comes to that, very few of the others are really worthy of it. Not that insistence on a precise fit is not right and proper on occasion. Several excellent and stimulating books have been written about art outside or above the region of common sense. They help us to clear up our ideas and confirm our principles. Probably the best, and certainly the most amusing, recent book about art was *Art*, by Mr. Clive Bell. Its principles were unassailable, but they had the disadvantage of excluding from art practically everything produced within the Christian era. In the same way a book might be written about human virtue which excluded from the ranks of good men and women everybody except the Saints of the Calendar—and a great many of them. Such a book might not be very encouraging to average persons trying to live a decent life in difficult circumstances, but the fact remains that the Calendar of Saints is a necessary standard of reference. It reminds us what goodness is humanly possible. So Mr. Bell's book reminded us what art at its purest might mean. Also, at the time of stress in which it was written, it served the useful purpose of proving that the arguments based on principle against a certain movement in painting were foolish. The newer painting might be ugly, and it might be incomprehensible; but, when it came to æsthetic principles, it was ever so much purer than the mass of work from which the accepted canons of art criticism were derived. Incidentally, Mr. Bell's book, or its reception, brought out the interesting fact that most art critics praise or blame pictures for qualities which have nothing whatever to do with art. The defect of the newer painting was that it had everything to do with art and nothing to do with anything else; and so in a workaday world of mixed capacities for æsthetic enjoyment it was a counsel of perfection.

The object of these remarks is to explain that the view of art adopted in these pages leaves the counsel of perfection unquestioned, and even praised—as an ideal. "Perfection," by the way, is used here of kind and not of degree, for painting, as practised and understood, is a mixed art, and not like music a pure form of expression. It can be, and is, used to imitate nature, convey information, illustrate an incident, or tell a story.

Strictly speaking, these functions have nothing to do with art; but for a great many people, including some of the most intelligent, they are the only purposes of pictures, and in a great many pictures, including some of the most skilful, they are the only apparent motives. It would be unreasonable and intolerant to rule out these people and these pictures because they misunderstand or obscure the true meaning of art. The better way is to recognise them for what they appreciate and perform, while standing out for expression as the ideal.

Here, again, the question is not unlike that of goodness. "All for love" is the ideal motive of conduct, but in an imperfect world most of us have to get along with a sense of duty. Therefore we praise John Brown for paying his debts and keeping sober, while recognising that Mary Magdalen or Francis of Assisi was the truer type of goodness. All we demand is that John Brown should not ask us to mistake self-respect for love of God. So, in the same way, though "all for expression" is the ideal motive of art, we need not sniff at a reasonably good representation so long as it does not pretend to be something different. If it does, we have a right to apply our strictest rule of criticism and to point out that just as goodness does not begin until duty is lost in love, so art does not begin until representation is forgotten as an aim. Compared with love and expression as motives of life and art, duty and representation are merely incidental. But in practice, and because we are all miserable sinners, it is better not to apply the rule gratuitously. So long as we do not confuse our principles, it is better to take the person and the picture for what they are worth in an imperfect world. Therefore in these pages the definition of art is nothing more than the mass of respectable pictures bequeathed to us by the past and being produced in the present; whether they be pieces of pure expression, skilful imitations of nature, apt illustrations, or pleasing ornaments. As happens with the motives of human conduct, they are generally mixed.

There is the same necessity for some sort of working definition of "modern" art. Strictly speaking, William Blake was a much more modern artist than Edouard Manet, because both in his conception of reality and in his use of paint he was much more in sympathy with modern ideas. Not only by religion and poetry, but by the critical tests of modern physical and psychological analysis, Blake's conception of appearances as obscuring reality is becoming more and more securely established; and his idea of paint as a substance to be used not for imitating something else but for its own sake as a means of expression is only now generally accepted in practice. A point that I have never seen dwelt on, by the way, is that it always is the imaginative artist who is curious about his materials. The prose writings of Blake are full of gallipots. There is no paradox in this, because it stands to reason that the more a man is convinced that the invisible world is the real one, the less inclined he will be to use his materials for imitating appearances. Instead, he will try to get out of his materials what they have to say about reality in their own language; and this demands a constant study of their properties. Blake's contention that oil painting must be an inferior art because you could not use real gold and silver in it, was not only good art criticism, but flat common sense. All art is praise of the Creator by and through His creatures, of which gold is the most precious in man's estimation. If you are to praise God in gold, it is foolish to degrade it for the sake of getting nearer to the actual appearance of sunlight on trees. As Ruskin pointed out, the proper way is to gild the leaves, as was done in early Italian frescoes and tempera paintings; as also by the Japanese screen painters.

However, Blake died in 1827 and Manet in 1883, and there are still painters like Mr. Sargent using paint with supreme skill for the imitation of appearances. Therefore in these pages "modern" means, broadly, contemporary art, whether the belief expressed in it be the old superstition of realism or the more modern reaffirmation of reality. Convenience limits the word "art" to painting, and necessity to little more than British painting.

Chapter II.

BEFORE considering the art of any period it is as well to look round at the conditions that produced or shaped it. For art does not begin in the studios, and even the craftsmanship that embodies it is affected by many external circumstances—facilities for travelling, the relative cost of materials, the progress of chemical discovery and mechanical invention, and, particularly, social and domestic habits. It is likely, for example, that the modern habit of living in flats will have an appreciable effect upon the form and size of works of art; and pictorial advertising has already reacted upon design and treatment in easel pictures. What happens in the studios is a reaction, immediate or delayed, to the moral and material conditions of surrounding life in general.

The moral conditions are much the more important because they modify the artistic impulse itself. It is not necessary here to go deep into the nature of the artistic impulse, but some reference to theories about the origin of art will be convenient. Whether the earliest forms were utilitarian, decorative, illustrative, or religious in their motive, it seems likely that all early art was a sort of magic. Man wanted to pacify his God, record an event, get power over beasts, or dignify his person or his cave; and he carved, scratched, or daubed a spell for the purpose. Observe that this leaves untouched the contention that the artistic impulse has no aim but self-satisfaction. Hunger has no other aim, but it invariably concerns itself with something to eat. Whenever art got itself materials and a method or methods, it became a sort of magic or "medicine."

Now this, if true, as I believe, is enormously important, because the whole character of art depends on whether we are to regard it as primarily a logical or a magical means to an end. It stands to reason that a man will adopt entirely different methods according as he hopes to evoke and convey reality by description or by a spell. If the former, the description can hardly be too full and accurate; if the latter, the spell can hardly be too concentrated and formal. In this respect there is no difference between supernatural and natural magic; between calling up a spirit, or the reflection of your lover, and the machinery of hypnotism. A formal incantation is the essence of the business. What it amounts to, I suppose, is that the subconscious mind is at the mercy of rhythm.

In practice, art has always been a compromise between the logical and the magical ways of trying to evoke reality. The view in favour at the moment, I believe, is that art has improved in proportion as the magical element has declined. If this means that art has improved in its secondary functions of imitation and description, in its appeal to the logical intelligence, it can hardly be denied; and, as I shall presently try to show, there is a Nemesis to improvement in that direction. For the moment it is enough to say that, broadly speaking, the successive changes in art have been as it swung to the magical or the logical side. On the whole the magical tendency has been most pronounced in proportion as art has been associated with religion. Egyptian art and early Greek were strongly hieratical, and in early Christian art not only the subject-matter of painting, but the treatment—the colours of clothes and the symbolical accessories—was determined, not by the choice of the individual artist, but by the dogmas of the Church.

It is equally true that naturalistic art and naturalistic religion have always gone hand in hand. The connection between Protestantism and the Dutch seventeenth-century school was too marked to be accidental, and it cannot be denied that there was at the same time a great improvement both in domestic virtue and in realistic representation. The fair comment that the religion was less religious and the art less

artistic need not be expanded. These changes in art are only touched on here because of their bearing on the present.

Coming nearer to our own time, there was the breakaway from Classical tradition at the end of the eighteenth century. Here, again, there was at least a parallelism between the reaction in art and the reaction in life, of which the most obvious phenomenon was the French Revolution. By this time the religious element was somewhat obscured, though in England there was a distinct affinity between the empty formalism of the Established Church and the empty formalism of Classical art. Observe that the Classical scholar of the period was also the divine; and in all probability the Romantic revival in art and the Wesleyan revival in religion were closely connected. Wesley's loyalty to the sacramental side of religion through all the naturalism of revival meetings might fairly be compared to Wordsworth's recognition of the mystical element in poetry through all his preference for naturalistic diction. Blake, it may be observed, kept his head; and could paint and write with the simplicity of a child and the spiritual authority, the hieratical gestures, of a High Priest.

The next great change, with direct consequences to the present, was that in the mid-nineteenth century associated with the industrial revival and the rise of democracy. It was not for nothing that Courbet was accused of helping to pull down the Vendôme Column, that Rossetti taught drawing in a working-men's college, or that William Morris was a Socialist orator. On both sides of the Channel the gospel of "Work" was in the air. As expressed in painting by Courbet and Ford Madox Brown, and in literature by Zola and Carlyle, respectively, it gives a very fair indication of racial differences. The Frenchmen excelled in objective truth, the Englishmen in moral reflections and deductions.

Closely associated with and supporting these ideas was the enormous advance in material science. It was the age of things as they are—by the test of reasoning upon the evidence of the senses. This was reflected not only in the attitude of art to life, but in its methods. Realism, Naturalism, pre-Raphaelism and Impressionism, with all their differences, were all expressions of the same belief: that reality in art is to be got by objective truth to nature. The belief, or the superstition, was backed for all it was worth by the men of science, and Huxley and Pasteur were as much apostles of realism as were Zola and Bastien-Lepage. In art, however, the Englishmen were more or less half-hearted in their pursuit of reality through realism. The very word "pre-Raphaelism" covers a compromise. The apostles of the movement were determined to be true to nature in the objective sense, but they could not get rid of their instinctive liking for pure colour and decorative design; their subconscious faith in magic; and so they harked back to a period in which fidelity to nature in the objective sense and magic of colour and design seemed to be combined. There is a similar half-heartedness in the writings of such men as Tennyson and Kingsley. Tennyson marches boldly up to a nature "red in tooth and claw," and then recoils into a "somehow good."

But it was left to an American to attempt the most amusing compromise with realism. The art of Whistler was the art of painting nature "in the dusk with the light behind her." Essentially realistic in its attitude, it shirked the full consequences of realism and sought relief in graceful evasions, and softened the truth by speaking in undertones. Whistler never stood up to nature and tried to find the reality behind the appearance. His conception of art was rather to conceal the truth. It implied that nature was a plain person who, nevertheless, looked well in certain lights, moods, and conditions, and best of all when she looked like somebody or something else. The business of the artist was to find these lights, moods, and condi-

tions. That Whistler had a genius for finding them nobody would deny, nor that he had supreme skill in suggesting them when found; but the effect must happen, or seem to happen. Design must never be obtruded. Thus, though the pictures of Whistler are superficially like the paintings of the Chinese and Japanese in form, nothing could be less like them in spirit. Whistler tried to make look natural what the Eastern painters frankly owned as a convention. A Chinese painting is a formal design, and every touch in it is part of an elaborate ritual. When all is said, Whistler was a master of slightness. It was not the difficulties of craftsmanship that he evaded, but the difficulties of interpretation. His little etchings and pastel drawings are better than his large oil paintings, because the art of evasion is only satisfying on a small scale and in a slight medium.

It was more than an accident that Whistler was an American. There seems to be something in the American mind that shrinks away from reality and takes refuge in sentimental evasions or juggling with those misleading deductions of our bodily senses that are called facts. The often observed segregation of the sexes in American social life, and the phenomenon of "nature faking," are cases in point. In America the social graces are a veil flung over the harsh realities of life, and not an imaginative, though formal, interpretation of them as they must be in every society that is not merely "Society." As for the second, it is indeed remarkable that the nation of "Uncle Remus" should fail to see that the fable, with its frank conventions, is a much truer interpretation of animal life than the life history in terms of human psychology.

But this may be thought a digression. To get back to art, it is right and proper that Mr. Joseph Pennell should be not only a loyal disciple, but a countryman of Whistler. Mr. Pennell loves drawing factories; but, when it comes to the point, the highest artistic compliment he can pay to a factory is to say that it looks like a cathedral. It never seems to occur to him that the only true compliment, artistic or otherwise, you can pay to a factory is to say that it looks like a factory, and to make it so.

It is all very well to poke fun at the "wallness of the wall" and the "treeness of the tree," but there never was any great art which did not insist on the essential and permanent character of things in so far as it could be apprehended by the full consent of all human faculties according to the full knowledge of the period. Whistler's gibe at the artist who, wishing to paint a line of poplars in the dusk on the further bank of the river, would first row across in a boat in broad daylight to see what they were like, was a confession of artistic cowardice. No great artist was ever afraid that the impressions of his eye would be disturbed by the knowledge of his mind. What it amounts to is that the realist is afraid of seeing too much. In order to keep his vision artistic, he has to cultivate short-sightedness.

Art at the close of the nineteenth century, with all its merits, presents the spectacle of a series of ingenious attempts to escape from the logic of realism. While this was going on in the studios the progress of material science was solving the problem in another way. The Nemesis to improvement in accurate representation was close at hand. But that must wait for another chapter. What remains here is to say that this hasty survey of artistic movements does not pretend to be anything more than a series of assertions. The object is to encourage people to think out the problems for themselves, to recognise that not merely in the subjects it represents, but in its methods and aims, art is an expression of life, reflecting, though often obscurely, all the moral and material peculiarities of its own period.

Chapter III.

THE great discovery of the twentieth century was that things are not what they seem. An inevitable consequence was a reaction from Impressionism in painting, because Impressionism swore by appearances. The discovery was not a new one; it had always been the common talk of religion, philosophy, and poetry; but now for the first time it was confirmed by the plodding methods of science itself. Critical research into the intimate constitution of matter and exploration of the human mind by psychological experiment both arrived at the same conclusion: that what we call facts are only convenient fancies for dealing with the mystery of life. Consequently the distinctions between religious, poetical, and scientific truth ceased to exist; though religion, poetry, and science might still employ their own methods of expressing the truth. As a matter of fact, each was left freer than before to go its own way, because there was no longer any need to consider the susceptibilities of the others; to make religion a little less religious and science a little less scientific for the sake of tolerance. "Reconciliation between Religion and Science" is now a meaningless phrase. It is only when you distinguish clearly between truth and accuracy that you can apply them without reserve or compromise.

Neither in life nor art did the discovery result in an immediate revolution in practice. What happened was that, continuing to do things more or less in the same way, we turned our faces in another direction. The notion of unchanging elements with definite atomic weights remained valid for most of the practical purposes of chemistry; but it could no longer be accepted as a complete and exhaustive explanation of the material universe. Reason continued to be a useful guide in the practical affairs of life; but, though the latest, it could no longer be considered the last word in human consciousness or the most important. Art still continued to make use of appearances as convenient symbols of reality; but it began to make use of them with a difference; as temporary substitutes for truth with no special sanctity in themselves. In art, as in life, the facts of appearance remained pretty much the same; but they had a different bearing. Their practical value to the painter was enhanced rather than otherwise by the conviction that they were not reality; as a shipwrecked crew on a desert island might value bits and scraps and observe regulations that had no special value or sanctity in ordinary life.

The working of the conviction in human consciousness had some queer effects. As might have been expected, religious persons, philosophers, and poets, to whom the truer conception of reality was familiar, kept their heads; but some of the others jumped to conclusions. They were in a great hurry to realise the new ideals in life and art; they wanted to throw away the bits and scraps and regulations all at once. All sorts of old intellectual fallacies were revived in such forms as Christian Science, crystal gazing, and Esoteric Buddhism; and in social and political affairs all sorts of short cuts to the millennium, such as free-love and Protection, were proposed. In art there were all the attempted short cuts to reality that may be grouped together under the general name of Post-Impressionism.

But before considering Post-Impressionism we must consider something else that, independently of moral causes, prepared the way for it. That was the invention and rapid improvement of photography, the Nemesis to improvement in accurate representation of appearances "by hand." In the whole history of art there is nothing more amusing than the attitude of painters to photography, and the successive changes in their attitude. At first they said that it was not true. What they meant was that there were certain mechanical defects in photography, or rather certain optical differences between the

photographic lens and the human eye. The obvious fact that the ordinary photograph represents a one-eyed view of nature, the entire inability of the earlier photographers to reproduce colour, and the uneven response of silver salts to the spectrum—resulting in perversions of tone—were other defects of photography that gave courage to the painters.

The improvement and correction of lenses in the direction of human optics, the application of the stereoscopic principle, the discovery of a means to reproduce colour, and the rectification of tone-values by means of a light filter or screen queered the pitch again; and the painters fell back on vague talk about "selection." The camera could not select. Then came along Mr. Muybridge with his instantaneous photographs of jumping horses. The engagingly awkward attitudes revealed and their superficial affinity to the work of Japanese animal draughtsmen, then coming into fashion, confused the issue and intrigued the painters enormously. If the camera could not select in space, it could select in time with a celerity and precision beyond the power of any human eye, and the results had all the appeal of novelty. Less reflective painters began to educate their eyes on the lines of photographic vision, and the fashion in snapshot drawing survives to this day. The final conclusion seemed to be that photography was true, but that for the purposes of art all truth must be diluted with temperament. It was about this time that painters began to talk seriously about their personalities. A sort of working compromise between painting and photography was arrived at. Concessions were made on both sides; eminent painters did not disdain to take hints from photography, photographers prejudiced their legitimate art with reference to painting, and, with equal justice on the same grounds, claimed to express their personalities also.

Of course, it was all a to-do about nothing. There is no distinction whatever between artistic truth and plain truth, but the distinction between truth and accuracy is vital. Photography is neither true nor untrue; it is only capable of accuracy. Except in choice or arrangement of subject and conditions, you can only express your personality in photography in the sense in which you might be said to express it by errors in arithmetic. Painting, on the other hand, has nothing whatever to do with accuracy, but everything to do with truth. So long as painting identifies itself with accurate representation of appearances it is, if not in fact at any rate in possibility, hopelessly outclassed by the camera. The moment the painter regards appearances as merely symbols of a reality conceived by his mind, he is out of range of any camera that can ever be invented.

This seems to lead us up to the insoluble problem, "What is truth?" But the solution need not even be attempted. Truth for the individual is what he believes in with all his heart; using that old-fashioned word for the sum of all his faculties, conscious and unconscious. Observe that this leaves the existence of absolute truth unquestioned. We shall apprehend absolute truth when we shall have reached our absolute heart, which is God. For the moment we have to get along with such measure of truth as our imperfect hearts allow us to conceive. But in art, at any rate, we must make use of the whole conception; the harvest of the mind as well as the gleanings of the eye as an optical instrument. The man who tries to limit himself to the latter abandons truth, in the human sense, without attaining accuracy, in the mechanical sense. On its own ground he is easily beaten by the machine.

Wilfully to reject the gleanings of the eye is as prejudicial to truth as to accept them alone as evidence. It is not the choice or refusal of appearances that determines the æsthetic value of painting, but the choice between truth and accuracy in representing them. Briefly, the mistake of Impressionism was that it switched

George Clausen, R.A.

"Kitty"

A STUDY in simplicity by a great painter. Observe the gradation of handling, in which the quality of paint is preserved throughout, although the different textures are sufficiently indicated. The black ribbon plays its part in the design by tone as well as by shape and position. If you cover it up, it is as if a note were missing from a scale. Yet with all this considered art, nothing is lost of the essential simplicity of the subject.

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Plate I.

Wynne Apperley

"The Death of Procris"

A LEGITIMATE variation of the famous picture by Piero di Cosimo, by a painter who alternates between bold water-colours of architecture in sunlight and the delicate pre-Raphaelism reproduced here. The spirit of the original is revived with great sincerity.

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Plate II.

Gerald Moira

"A Decoration"

THIS excellent painting well deserves its title. It is obviously the work of a man who understands the principles and conditions of mural decoration. Nothing is lost of the "story" element, of the subject interest, and the landscape background is in perfect harmony with the occasion; and yet, with all these pictorial qualities, the essential character of the wall is preserved, and an architectural setting implied throughout the design.

Plate III.

Archibald Barnes

"Ladies at Rayne"

A CHARACTERISTIC work by an artist who may be said to have leapt into fame with a single water-colour—"Juno in London," in the Academy of 1913. It shows the typical "painter," willing to sacrifice everything that might hinder the free play of his medium.

Plate IV.

P. Wilson Steer

(*Exhibited at the Goupil Galleries*)

THE general aims of Mr. Steer have some affinity with those of Turner in his later works. They consist in distilling from naturalistic vision its purely æsthetic elements and making the picture of them. Everything is translated into terms of painting, but without any obvious alteration of the facts of nature.

Plate V.

Ethel Wright

"Green Bird"

THE aim of the artist, here, has been to make a design in pure colour, as for stained-glass, but at the same time to preserve the characteristic handling of paint.

Plate VI.

Mark Gertler

"Agapanthus"

APART from its excellent colour, this picture is interesting as an attempt to intensify reality by simplification and a very slight formality of treatment. The result is much firmer than if all the minor accidents of contour and tone had been reproduced.

Plate VII.

A. Palmer

PRIMARILY a study in colour, this picture also shows that pastel is capable of firm treatment in competent hands.

Plate VIII.

off, or tried to switch off, everything but optical vision; the mistake of Post-Impressionism was that it switched off, or tried to switch off, everything but intuition. Both, while producing many interesting works, failed in their aim. In his prismatic analysis of light the Impressionist was, after all, painting from the memory of scientific researches, and not what he saw with his bodily eyes, and from his most abstract invention the Post-Impressionist could hardly keep out some hint of appearances.

As compared with the deeper, steadier and less conscious working of the time-spirit in contemporary art the phenomenon of Post-Impressionism is not unlike that of Christian Science. They are hasty reactions from the fallacies of realism and materialism respectively. There is nothing in Post-Impressionism that is not contained implicitly in the body of earlier painting, and there is nothing in Christian Science that is not contained implicitly in the body of earlier religious belief; but in each case there is complete isolation of certain truths from all the others in disregard of human faculty and practice. The truths are undeniable in themselves, but they are presented in a form too "neat" for truthful application. One might almost say that the moment a truth is stated explicitly it becomes untrue. It is not so much that Post-Impressionism is untrue to art, or that Christian Science is untrue to Christianity or to Science, as that both are untrue to human nature; and it is because they cannot be completely translated into practice in every emergency that both lend themselves to charlatanism. With all our new intimations of immortality we have not yet reached a stage in which we can afford to throw away our bits and scraps of fact and appearance and the rules and regulations that proceed from their convenient use and application. Faith will remove mountains, but for a molehill in your back garden it is better to use a shovel. Art is the expression of reality, but until we shall see God face to face it is wiser to pay some attention to His garment.

Still, with the discovery confirmed that things are not what they seem, and imitative painting made a blind-alley occupation by photography, something like Post-Impressionism was bound to happen. And, with all its extravagancies, Post-Impressionism does point the general direction in which painting will probably develop. It is an overstatement in painting of ideas that are now familiar in most other departments of life.

If then, you will say, the proper concern of painting is the representation of appearances in the spirit of truth and not of accuracy, what modifications of appearance may the painter allow himself? What distance shall he paint from nature, so to speak? It is all very well to say that he should paint the thing as he feels it with all his heart, but feeling is a vague and flexible mould for concrete images. You may feel a sunset as a pain in the stomach. How are you going to paint that?

The question is a fair one, and any attempted answer must be subject to all the differences of human personality. But there is one very profitable field of inquiry—the nature of the stuff. Painting is, after all, the art of using paint; and in the decision of what is truth in art paint should have at least as large a voice as the object represented. When we ask what is truth in life, whatever the subject under discussion, we expect the answer to be given in terms of human nature and possibility. The trouble is that, as a witness for truth, paint—or at any rate oil paint—is venal. It lends itself with fatal facility to that form of imitation which by sincerely flattering appearances obscures reality.

Let us consider for a moment some other form of art in which the materials used are strongly characteristic and comparatively stubborn. Stained-glass, for example. Apart from the difficulty of cutting glass to a closely realistic outline, any undue effort in the direction of realistic imitation results in a degradation of

quality so obvious that a child can see that it is bad art. The result may be true to the subject represented, but it is not true to the material. Apart from any question of beauty, it is not real. Probably, in the last resort, that is where reality differs from realism. In life a person may behave correctly according to the situation in which he finds himself, but if he behaves out of character we say that his behaviour is unreal. So in the same way reality in art demands not only the full reaction of the artist to the subject as he conceives it, but full and characteristic expression of the materials employed. If you went through all the materials used in art, from stone to pastel, you would find that the effect of reality depended a good deal upon the modifications of appearance, differing with each material, determined by their characters. In order to seem real the same subject would have to be treated differently accordingly as it was carried out in stone or bronze or needlework or paint. And, speaking broadly, the modifications would have to be greatest in proportion to the intractability of the material. It is remarkable how extreme they may be without destroying the effect of reality so long as they are dictated by the character of the material. The material becomes transparent, so to speak, and you see not it but the subject intended, though it may be very little "like" in the optical sense. On the other hand, the effect of unreality when a material is used out of character is due mainly to the material itself getting in the way. You become conscious of the stuff as you would not if it were used properly.

All this, of course, is only another way of saying that a translation must be complete and perfect if you are not to be more conscious of the language than of the meaning conveyed. Now, in spite of its facility, even oil paint has its limitations. For one thing, if a man use it for imitative ends he must sacrifice all freedom of handling. In practice he cannot get any nearer to the appearances of nature than is indicated by the character of brushwork without his paint getting in the way; and the reason why many pictures look "painty" is not that the paint is laid on too thickly or roughly, but that the treatment is too literal. Once let the imitative aim be abandoned and the brushwork can be as free and pronounced as you like without destroying the effect of reality.

On the other hand, there is a limit to the degree in which oil painting can disregard the appearances of nature. Oil paint is not a substance that will "stand alone"—like stone, for example. The roughest hewing of a block of stone is enough to suggest the image of a man, because the block itself will do the rest. But with paint you must have something to spread it on, and you cannot let the patch of paint just leave off as you could the block of stone. You must have some form to contain it. If you reject the forms of nature you must invent other forms, perhaps geometrical forms; and then the onus of reality is put upon your invention, whether or not it really conveys anything to your fellow creatures. So that between the check on imitation caused by its character and consistency and the check on undue abstraction caused by its inability to stand alone, the characteristic use of all paint, for all its facility, is kept within reasonable bounds.

There is another check upon the imitative misuse of oil paint besides its consistency, and that is colour itself. Human nature demands colour, but the craving can only be indulged with safety if the paint is used properly. Why is it that the colours in an Academy picture often look too bright, not to say gaudy, while the colours in a monkish illumination do not, though comparison would show them to be actually brighter? Because in the illumination the colours are combined with a formal style of drawing. Both drawing and colour are, so to speak, at the same remove from nature. There is no discrepancy between them, and therefore no effect of unreality. In the Academy picture

the bright colours are combined with a style of drawing which closely imitates the appearances of nature, and therefore they look too bright. The artist may tell you that he "saw" the colours like that. What he means is that he felt them like that, but had not the courage to feel form in the same way. He, quite properly, translated the element of colour into terms of painting, but did not at the same time translate the element of form. His colour and his form are at different removes from nature, and so the effect is unpleasant and unreal.

The real answer to the question, "What modifications of appearance may the painter allow himself, what distance shall he paint from nature?" is contained in the paint-pot; in the consistency of paint and in the intrinsic appeal of pure colour. At the risk of being tedious I have dwelt at length on these points because of their bearing on modern art. For one reason or another—the confirmed discovery in every department of life that things are not what they seem, the substitution of reality for realism as an aim, the keener inquiry into the nature of things themselves, or the cornering of accuracy by photography—painters have been driven back to their paint-pots to find their inspiration, or part of their inspiration, there. I do not mean that they have reasoned it out consciously for themselves, but that by a dozen little imperceptible pulls and pushes modern art is being shepherded into the way it should go.

Chapter IV.

PHOTOGRAPHY, which threatened to queer the pitch of painting, has helped it in more ways than one. In one of them the parent publication of this volume, the magazine *Colour*, may claim an important and honourable share. I mean the art of reproduction in colour. In turning over the pages of this collection it cannot have escaped an acute observer that, on the whole, those pictures come out best in which there is a definite and well-articulated design, and in which the colouring is frank and relatively flat. Of course, the comparative inferiority of some of the others might be put down to mechanical defects in the process of reproduction, but a picture is subject to similar accidents in the circumstances of life. Unless the design be firm and well-knit, and the colouring reasonably flat, a picture must be hung in a carefully selected light and looked at only from a chosen distance. Everything else being equal, it is fair to say that the best picture is that which will survive the greatest number of accidents of position and lighting in the living-room; so that in the end it comes true that one test of a picture is suitability for mechanical reproduction. A French painter, whose name I forget, meant the same thing when he said: "I want to design my pictures so that a house-painter could paint them." It is true that there is a beauty of handling which distinguishes the work of the artist from that of the house-painter, but that is not lost in photographic reproduction, as anybody can see who will look at the pictures in this volume. What suffers in photographic reproduction is the superficial charm, depending on tricky modulation, which might be compared to *beauté du diable* in a woman.

In the whole history of art I know of nothing more beautiful than this double service of photography. On the one hand it has made imitative painting a blind-alley occupation by showing that it can be done better by machinery, and on the other it has put a premium on good design and clear and simple statement by loyally reproducing them. By discouragement in one direction and encouragement in another it has defined the true province of painting better than volumes of argument.

Another thing that has had a great and beneficial influence on painting is pictorial

advertising by means of posters. For one thing it has rehabilitated the wall. The circumstances of modern life do not yet conduce to a great revival of mural painting, the ideal, as it was the earliest, form of pictorial art in Western Europe; but there is no reason why the framed easel picture should not be designed for its place on the wall. There could not be a falser idea of pictures than that illustrated in genre paintings of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, in which a periwigged connoisseur is shown peering at a corner of a painting on an easel through a magnifying glass. One does not know whether to be glad or sorry that this view still survives in the sale-room. On the whole, perhaps, it is as well that the dealer should be encouraged to think of all works of art as a sort of "curios," so that painting as an expression of life and a grace to living may be freed from his attentions.

The proper place for a picture is on the wall, where its presence can be felt in all the ordinary occupations of the home. There can be no doubt that by decorating walls and hoardings posters have unconsciously confirmed the habit of looking in the right direction and with the right sort of attention—as for passing refreshment in the affairs of life—for pictures. But, apart from that, posters have had a direct influence upon the methods of painting. Not only by practice, since many painters design them, but by example, since everybody is exposed to them whether he will or not, they are constantly asserting the importance of design and of that simplicity and clearness of treatment which enables a picture to "carry" equally well at any reasonable distance.

There is yet another way in which both photographic reproduction and posters have affected painting for the good. That is by the limitations in range and quality of the colours used in printing. Artists often complain bitterly of this. They say: "Oh, but you should have seen the original!" If the design was made for reproduction, the complaint is about as reasonable as would be that of a writer whose manuscript was too subtle for type, or a composer whose work was out of range of the instruments. It is the duty of every creative artist not merely to know but to use the limitations of the medium in which his work will finally appear. The good dramatist, for example, will make artistic use of the defects of the actor-manager for whom he writes his play. Personally, I could never understand why posters are not designed in the inks in which they are to be printed.

You may say that the limitations cannot have any effect upon pictures not painted for reproduction, but there is evidence in the history of water-colour that they can. The good tradition of water-colour in England owes a great deal to the fact that many of the early water-colourists worked for reproduction in aquatint. If their drawings were to come out well they had to be kept broad and simple, firmly designed, and carried out in a few flat tones. Not every drawing was made for reproduction, but the virtue became a habit where the necessity did not exist and remained after it had gone; and it is noticeable that the more recent development of water-colour is a return to the earlier manner after a period of licence in the extended resources of the colour-box—rather like what is said to happen to the apprentice to the confectionery business. Again, there can be no question that the illustrators of the "sixties" owed a great deal to their discipline by the wood-engravers.

So in the same way, though posters are not generally designed in oils, nor is every picture painted for reproduction, the limitations of process-printing have reacted favourably upon painting in general. Both artists and the public have become familiar with the virtue of simplicity and the good effect of a definite colour-scheme.

Not that the glorious fulness and freedom

possible in oil painting is a thing to be regretted in itself. But freedom brings its own dangers, and, in art as in life, without a strong sense of responsibility some external restraint is not a bad thing in all matters where facility is the danger. And it is fatally easy, much easier than in water-colour, to misuse oil paint for imitative purposes. On the whole, and particularly in England, where there is no very stern tradition of technique, it is a good thing for art that colour-printing continues to fall short of the full possibilities of oil painting. It is quite certain that these limitations would have no effect if they were not in the general direction in which art is developing.

I have hammered at these points because in most books about art the question of the material receives far too little attention. It seems to be assumed that the artist—painter, sculptor, or engraver—makes his design "in the air," and then proceeds to execute it with anything that comes handy. All the best works of art are conceived and designed in the material in a form dictated by its nature, and very often the material rather than the subject is the real inspiration. And, if you will think over the general meaning of the word "conception," nothing could be more natural. Every living thing, and a work of art is a living thing, is conceived in the substance in which it is to be born; and life does not suffer if substance rather than offspring inspire the creative act.

I have a strong suspicion that many of the earlier paintings, done at a time when painting materials were hard to come by and uncertain in quality, owe their characteristic beauty to the fact that the artist happened to have a good sample of a particular colour, and wanted to make the most of it. The subject, and in many cases the general treatment, was decided by the patron or by tradition, and so the most personal element in the whole business was the ingenuity expended in using the subject to show off the stuff.

A personal experience brought home this point of view to me very strongly some years ago. I was painting stage scenery at a lunatic asylum, when the company assembled for rehearsal. Amongst them was a music-hall artist, a patient, well enough to take a minor part in the performance, and extremely useful to us on account of his professional experience. Standing below the ladder upon which I was at work, he made one or two critical remarks. "If I were the guv'nor," he said, "I should say: 'I don't mind buying your paints, but you'll have to spread them about a bit more.'"

We had a good stage, but the arrangements for scene-painting were rather primitive, and standing on a ladder with your head in close proximity to a flaring gas "batten" and a bucket hanging on your left arm, dabbing at a swaying canvas with a "pound" brush, after an exacting day's work of another kind, is conducive to patchiness rather than real breadth of effect. At the moment I was rather nettled, but when I had had time to think it over it seemed to me a very good criticism.

After all, painting comes out of the paint-pot, and though "spreading it about" is rather a crude way of doing justice to paint, it is at least a recognition of its existence as a material. In a rough-and-ready way, too, it does describe the quality of breadth as distinct from covering a large surface in painting. But "spreading it about" means something more than either breadth or making the most of it in quantity; and, if the professional view of stage "properties" is a guide, I think it meant something more to my critic. It meant giving the paint a show as paint, apart from any representation that it was called upon to perform.

It is necessary to discriminate here between giving the paint a show as paint and letting it get in the way of representation; and I do not think that the distinction is too fine. The intrinsic quality of a material may be brought out and enjoyed separately without any prejudice to

reality in the representation. Nothing could be more like a real horse than a Chinese horse of jade, and yet the jade is very jade. It is defective translation that prejudices reality. We love and admire the English of the Bible as English without losing the sense of the words. As a matter of fact, it is when a translation is too close to the original, in the idiomatic sense, that reality is disturbed by the language. Exactly the same thing happens when a material of art is used to imitate the appearances of nature, unless the imitation be so close that there is no translation at all—which is wax-works.

Giving the material a show, though present in all good art, seems to me peculiarly characteristic of modern painting. Closely associated with it is the renewed appreciation of design. Here there is a remarkable parallel between modern art and modern life. It has become a truism that all social and political ideals must be based upon human nature; it is equally true that all artistic designs must be based upon the nature of the substances employed. Good design, in fact, whether political or artistic, implies not only expression of the ideal or conception, but expression of the people or substances in whom or which it is to be carried out. Anything short of that is exploitation, and we are coming to see that exploitation, no matter how lofty the purpose may seem, is the greatest crime in the world. We feel that we must not "use" anything or anybody, no matter for what purpose, without a due regard for their wishes and character. That is the real meaning of the present war. The ideal of Bismarck was not without a certain grandeur in the abstract, but it could only be applied at the cost of human nature, and sooner or later humanity was bound to turn against it. In the last resort the rights of small nationalities means nothing more than their full expression.

It is not suggested, of course, that the more expressive tendency of modern painting is due to deliberate thinking on the part of painters. What happens in any period is that by a combination of causes, moral and material, and including what may be called accidents, the creative impulse is guided into certain channels; checked here, encouraged there, so that in the long run art is a reflection of its age in another and a deeper sense than that shown by choice of subject-matter.

The attempt here has been to show some of the causes that have influenced contemporary art. Of these the most important, though not necessarily the most consciously perceived, are the general reaction against materialism and the exploitation of people and things that it implied, and the rapid perfection of photography. With a truer conception of reality as not necessarily evident to the eye but residing in the nature of things, and a mechanical means of realistic representation, the tendency to expression in painting was bound to be confirmed. Post-Impressionism was nothing more than a panic plunge into pure expression, and the best corrective is a strong hold upon the nature of paint.

In practice, and without thinking it out, this is what the best painters have done in all ages. They have based their art in reality as conceived by their minds, but they have used appearances to embody their conceptions for the understanding of their fellow creatures. The conception of reality has varied with the general belief of the age and the particular insight or imagination of the individual, and so has the degree of trust in appearances. A man of keen senses and weak spiritual sensibility will naturally paint closer to nature in the imitative sense. And if you examine the works of good painters who have aimed more directly at reality, you will find that they have tended to throw the onus of truth on design and the intrinsic qualities of their materials rather than on optical fidelity to facts. They have regarded the facts themselves as of

less importance than their arrangement, and in restating the facts in another material they have been very careful of the translation. Moreover, imagination and insight being equal, the best painters have allowed the nature of the material —the idiom of its language—to influence not only their translation of the facts, but the character of their design. They have got their design not only out of their conception of reality, but out of the stuff.

What it amounts to is nothing more than instinctive belief in the magical element in art. Design is a spell; and as the words of a spell have a potency beyond their dictionary meanings, so the imaginative painter will feel instinctively that his materials have a power to evoke reality quite apart from their capacity for representation. His aim will be not so much to represent appearances with paint as to translate appearances into terms of paint.

The fear of disrespect to nature by emphasising design is groundless. There is no special sanctity in the look of things. If a man be true to paint, he will in the long run be true to nature; and in painting, as in life, undue regard for appearances often goes with small respect for reality. It is often said that an artist has imposed an arbitrary design upon nature. Much more probably he has imposed an arbitrary design upon his materials. The things of nature can be arranged a hundred ways without any prejudice to reality; but the least violation of the nature of things destroys reality to that extent. You cannot separate art from craftsmanship, and form cannot be dissociated from substance, though it may bear little apparent relation to the look of the subject represented; and it is impossible to imitate in one substance the form of another without some sin against the nature of things. The tendency of modern painting might be described as the effort to establish a closer identity between form and substance.

Chapter V.

NO consideration of the influences upon modern art would be complete without some reference to the new inspiration from the East. I have often thought that the æsthetic sensibility of any period could be gauged by its attitude to Chinese art. The eighteenth century saw nothing in Chinese art but quaintness. Our forefathers accepted the pagoda as its most characteristic feature, and greatly preferred the Delft imitations of Chinese porcelain to the original pieces. By the middle of the nineteenth century the Western world had waked up to the fact that the Chinese and Japanese did know something about decorative design; but it was the decorative, and not what Mr. Clive Bell would call the "significant," element in their designs that appealed to such artists as Whistler and Rossetti. It was left for the present century to discover that the decoration was not so much an aim in itself as an accident resulting from a deep sense of the underlying harmony and unity of nature, combined with a reverent sympathy for materials.

Unlike Western art, which has alternated or hesitated between expression and realistic imitation as a means to evoke reality, the art of the Chinese has never swerved from expression. Consequently, and this is often overlooked, it has been able to carry realistic representation to extreme lengths without obscuring the issue; as a man who is at home in the spiritual world can indulge in material pursuits and enjoyments that would be fatal to a person who had no guidance but rules of conduct based on self-respect and the opinions of others. For the same reason the mediæval illuminators could afford to make jokes on the margins of their missals. No European painter dare allow himself the amount of detail that a Chinese animal painter often put into his work, for fear of being called photographic. The truth is that the amount of detail has no

F. C. Friescke

"Sur les Dunes"

A STUDY of light, the colour being hardly more than the shadow of light, yet the tones are so nicely related that there is no effect of unreality. The figure looks capable of movement.

Plate IX.

C. Kurihara

HERE we see the influence of Mr. Brangwyn proudly confessed. Traditional reserve is exchanged for the excitement of dramatic composition and the novelty of oil paint.

Plate X.

Laura Knight

"Marshmallows"

A TRUE study of "glow"; the sunlight seeming to be exhaled by the figure rather than reflected by it. "Sun-soaked flesh" may be said to be a speciality of this brilliant painter.

Plate XI.

E. Vuillard

(From the collection of Madame Blanche Marchesi)

THE work of a painter who relies more on the sensibility of his vision than on the intrinsic appeal of subject. Everything is weighed and balanced, and set down in its exact value and with great tact of arrangement. This is a form of art peculiarly French, as evident in the literature as in the painting of that nation.

Plate XII.

Sorolla y Bastida

"The Preparation of Dry Grapes"

BY one of the greatest living painters of sunlight, who shares with Zuloaga the leadership of the modern Spanish school. As the great Basque expresses the dignity, Sorolla gives us the movement and colour of his native land.

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Plate XIII.

Eric H. Kennington

"The Flower Girl"

THE work of a painter who combines, in the pre-Raphaelite manner, the attractions of keen drawing and bright colour. It is "Realism" with a difference; because the interest of character is not sacrificed to the immediate impression of the eyes.

Plate XIV.

A. Abramovitz

THE work of a man keenly sensitive to pattern ; trusting a great deal of the emotional effect intended to the design itself : the shapes of sky, the arrangement of dark stems, and the shadows on the grass.

Plate XV.

Anna Airy

"The Gamblers"

A DRAMATIC illustration by a painter who shows in her decorative studies of tree branches her gifts as a designer. Great appreciation of character is shown in the expressions of the different heads.

Plate XVI.

bearing on the question; it is the way the detail is seen and reproduced. However close to nature the Chinese painting, the detail is always subject to design, and there is always a complete translation into the idiomatic language of the material used. Subordination of detail to the general effect is quite a different thing, because the general effect may be merely an imitation of appearance—as in Impressionism, for example.

To compare a study by one of our best bird painters with a similar work by a Japanese or Chinese artist is a most illuminating experience. With less detail in the feathers, and a softer treatment, the Western work looks photographic, while the Eastern does not. In the Western work the detail has been exploited in the interests of accuracy, while in the Eastern it has been sympathetically enjoyed for its own sake. Every feather has been helped to expression in the new material. It is on account of their disregard of optical accuracy, by the way, that the diagrams in an ornithological or a botanical work are often not only clearer, but better artistically than the naturalistic illustrations. Not having to convince the eye, the artist has been able to devote himself to addressing the mind with all the powers and beauties of his medium.

For a similar reason there is no distinction in Chinese art between decorative and pictorial. Whether the artist carved a piece of jade or ivory, or painted a landscape in ink on silk, he was always about the business of expression. It is doubtful if you can express reality without becoming decorative. As Carlyle pointed out, all very sincere speech tends to be rhythmical, and the same idea is enshrined in "the music of the spheres." Too often the only thing the Western artist thinks about expressing is himself; though if there is one thing certain in art it is that a man must lose himself to find himself. Personality in art is what is left over when you have forgotten all about it in doing the work.

It is an interesting question, though rather beyond the scope of this book and the knowledge of the writer, how much Eastern art owes to its harmony with Eastern religion and philosophy. Not so much in the sense of being employed by them as in that of expressing the same beliefs and ideals. This unity, and its apparently beneficial effects upon art, has led some weak-headed Westerners astray—into "Esoteric Buddhism" and the like. It is not that Buddhism is "better" than Christianity in itself, or so good for the Western mind, but that the Eastern artist is able to make a more complete and single-hearted use of his religion in his work. Not only the spirit but the methods of his painting are backed by all he knows and believes about the visible and invisible worlds. One might almost call the advantage technical; the possession of an instrument that will serve all purposes. The Western artist, even when employed by the Church, is always having to make a compromise between faith and reason; between Sunday and weekday religion, so to speak. I do not mean in the sense of having to live by his painting, nor in having to paint secular subjects, but in having to paint—even when he designs a "sacred" or an "ideal" subject—as if he believed that appearance was the reality. In a sense an early Italian and a Victorian British angel are equally impossible; but the former does not look impossible, because it is frankly the expression of an idea, and not the copy of a healthy young woman with unexplained wings. The difference between the wings of an angel by Fra Angelico and by G. F. Watts is something other than the difference between decorative and pictorial treatment. It is the difference between reality and realism. The mind accepts the one angel without jibbing at the anatomy, but condones the other as a polite fiction—to be quizzed with the curate in profane moments. Mr. Granville Barker made the same happy distinction with his gold fairies in "Midsummer Night's Dream." They were absolutely real, and yet fixed for ever in a different world from that of the human actors; whereas the fairies of other

productions belong only to the make-believe world of pantomime. The Reformation drove all real angels and fairies into hiding, and only a few modern artists besides Blake have ever caught a glimpse of them. Certainly the creatures, dreadful in the wrong sense, that appear in contemporary war-pictures were made in Germany. It is the inadequacy of realistic art to give matter-of-fact expression to spiritual truths, by the way, that drives the Western artist into the dismal ways of allegory.

The distinction between Sunday and weekday religion is, or rather was, one of the paradoxes of Western life. And it must be admitted that the apparent success of the compromise between them in art is often astonishing. It is quite common, for example, to find a man engaged in or having money invested in some soul and beauty destroying business and at the same time writing poems or painting pictures of regret at the destruction of beauty by commercial enterprise with no apparent effect of insincerity. Still, the division of energy must rob the work of something, since the full weight of the man cannot be on both sides at once. "Cruel necessity" cannot be more than a merely sentimental inspiration, whereas the acceptance of spiritual reality by the Chinese artist appears to be perfectly matter-of-fact. He uses the same artistic convention for a goddess, a fairy, a mythical monster, a sage, a camellia, a horse, or a tiger.

Support is lent to this view by the fact that the sympathy between Eastern and Western art is always closest in proportion, as the latter *does* express the artist's whole reaction to the universe, visible and invisible. A Chinese painting which would look hopelessly out of place in a collection of Dutch seventeenth or French or English eighteenth century pictures would look perfectly at home among the Italian or Flemish "Primitives" in the National Gallery. The likeness of the "Earthly Paradise" by an unknown Ming painter, in the British Museum, to the work of Botticelli, has often been remarked. Nor is the sympathy confined to those periods in which the accident of being employed by the Church led the artist to paint subjects that are technically "sacred." I have seen a landscape by Cotman that could have been hung beside a Sung painting of a waterfall without any effect of incongruity. Or, to take an illustration from our own time, a Chinese painting would not look nearly so strange in the New English Art Club as it would in the Academy.

What it comes to is that when painting is done in the same spirit, regarding the appearances of nature as not more than convenient symbols of reality at the free disposal of design, and the materials of painting as having intrinsic properties capable of expression, the differences between Eastern and Western art are reduced to the differences between dialects of the same language.

All this, which may seem like a digression, has a direct bearing on contemporary art. The discovery of the twentieth century that things are not what they seem amounts to a reconciliation between faith and reason closer than any since the age of primitive belief which lasted until the end of the Gothic period. It was not necessarily that people were more religious, then, but that they made no distinction between knowing and believing. Like the body of Chinese art, the Gothic cathedral was a consistent reading of the whole universe in terms of different materials. Natural and supernatural history were treated with the same matter-of-factness. In the interval the human intellect made a wide excursion through the material world. Like a child with new toys, it delighted in facts, and this delight was reflected in art in pride of mastery over appearances. During the closing years of the nineteenth century, however, the human intellect arrived by several ways at the conclusion, always held by faith, that facts are only convenient fancies. Only then was the Western mind capable of appreciating the true meaning of Eastern art, and with less conscious borrowing

there was a much deeper sympathy and influence. Something must be allowed for greater freedom of intercourse between East and West, but much more for the frame of mind.

Western art, in short, has won its way by inductive reasoning back to the position always held by the East; and there can be no doubt that it has gained enormously in the process, and that it should keep its gains. A deliberate imitation of Chinese painting would be as foolish as a deliberate attempt to mix the elements of Buddhism and Christianity. It is even questionable if the new spirit in the West can be called "religious" in itself; the most that can be said for it is that it gives a chance to any religion the individual may have by discrediting material cocksureness and encouraging the expression of that sub-conscious mind which receives "intimations of immortality." And, in the last analysis, nothing has done more to bring this about, to reconcile Eastern and Western art and abolish the distinction between knowing and believing, than renewed interest in paint. The touch of nature that makes the whole world kin might very well be interpreted as the touch of a common substance. There is virtue in the stuff. It is only when you take a substance on its merits, and use it according to its laws without reference to keeping up appearances, that it becomes, in the true sense, a means of expression.

Chapter VI.

"TRUTH to nature" was the presumptuous artistic watchword of the closing years of the nineteenth century; "Truth to paint" is the humbler and more practical artistic watchword of the twentieth century; and the principle of Vincent van Gogh, "Be true to your palette, and nature results," is tacitly accepted by all the more characteristic painters of the present day.

That the principle was ever lost sight of was probably due mainly to the separation of the "professional artist" from the journeyman painter, the former being over-developed on the literary and theoretical side in Academies, while the latter declined to the mere labourer. William Morris and his colleagues tried hard to restore a more healthy relationship between the studio and the workshop, and the Arts and Crafts Society and the County Council Schools of Art have undoubtedly had some effect; but until we get a real revival of house-painting, in the sense of mural decoration, it is unlikely that the good old system of apprenticeship and different degrees of craftsmanship under a master-painter will return.

The obstacle is really economical. So long as contracts for decoration are given to firms of middlemen, there is bound to be a division of labour beyond that indicated by different kinds and degrees of skill. The whole system of picture-dealing, with its traffic in names, is also against the collaborative industry, which, as Morris & Co. were well aware, is the only basis for sound training and conditions in any craft. All this, of course, is only part of the general division between work and "business," which is such a characteristic evil of modern life. You have an unorganised body of men producing things, and a powerful ring dealing in the things that they produce. Prices, which are the counters of "business," bear no relation to values, and are decided mainly by fashion and advertisement. For the purposes of picture-dealing it is hardly necessary to see, or even to possess, the pictures; and they might conveniently be represented by "scrip."

With all these hindrances, however, modern painters are getting back to their paint-pots. Leaving out the deliberately "advanced" efforts, you cannot go into a more modern exhibition, say that of the New English Art Club, without

being struck by the signs of greater interest in paint as paint. As compared with the Academy, the difference is, broadly, that between an exhibition of pictures and an exhibition of paintings. In the more modern exhibition the imitative, illustrative and story-telling characters are less pronounced; while, on the other hand, the designs are more definite, the forms clearer and simpler, and the colours brighter and flatter in treatment; and the paint itself seems to be used with more concern for its intrinsic properties and less for its facility in realistic representation. What it amounts to is that, after a long preoccupation with truth to nature, in the optical sense, painting is coming back to the view that the real potency of a picture is in form and colour expressed in characteristic terms of the material the artist happens to be using.

Here as elsewhere, however, you will find different degrees of realism in representation. The degree depends upon the whole mental make-up of the individual artist; and, as a rule, the results are happiest when he obeys the consensus of all his faculties without any ulterior motive. A decorative or an abstract design by Mr. John Sargent is not an exhilarating performance; while, on the other hand, when Mr. Augustus John sets out to give us a realistic portrait we rather wish that he wouldn't. It is mainly a matter of vision. A strong imagination, that is to say, a strong vision of reality, has no need of realism to convey the impression of truth; it can reduce the forms of nature to conventional symbols, trees to triangles on sticks, and the sea to wavy lines, and still the truth will be conveyed; while a man of weak imagination instinctively relies on the close reproduction of actual appearances, and develops great skill in reproducing them. On the whole, Mr. Belloc's advice to the child is good for the artist: "If you were born to walk the ground, Remain there; do not fool around." Both Martha and Mary loved our Lord, but they had different ways of expressing their love. Superior as is imaginative to imitative painting, there is nothing more depressing than when a painter of strong realistic bent attempts an imaginative design.

But with all these individual differences there is a characteristic general difference in the realism attempted by modern painters. Speaking generally, it is no longer an optical realism. The portraits at the New English Art Club do not, as a rule, jump out of their frames at you, nor do the landscapes deceive you into thinking you could walk through the wall.

The difference is not easy to make clear in words, but it can be made clearer by illustration. Why, for example, cannot the late Mr. Frith, who was painting more or less at the same time, be grouped with the pre-Raphaelites? Their pictures—Madox Brown's "Work," for example—are even fuller than his of "corroborative detail to give artistic verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing" representation. The difference is, broadly, that in Mr. Frith's pictures the artistic verisimilitude is aimed at the eye, while in Madox Brown's it is aimed at the mind. In the one case the eye is made the critic, while in the other it is used only as a channel. I cannot remember any picture by the greater pre-Raphaelites, not even the "Blind Girl" of Millais, that seems to aim at optical illusion. Rightly or wrongly, the detail is treated as a sort of moral or decorative asset, to be dwelt on lovingly for its own sake and for its value to the mind, and not at all in order to make the subject more convincing to the eye. As a matter of cold fact, it often made the subject less convincing to the eye; but it was cheerfully put there either because it was there or because it had some symbolical or decorative meaning.

With less moral earnestness, but more tact, you will find the same sort of realism in modern exhibitions. Painters like Mr. William Strang, Mr. Eric H. Kennington, and Mr. William Rothenstein keep very close to nature, and introduce a considerable amount of detail into their pictures, but they never seem to be trying to

deceive the eye. One might compare the difference between mental and optical realism to that between trying to reproduce the noises of a street by finding the right words for them and by making inarticulate noises to imitate them. The latter method might be more successful in creating an immediate illusion, but only at the sacrifice of the characteristic interest and beauty of language. So, as the works of the pre-Raphaelites illustrate, mental realism in painting is compatible with expression of the intrinsic beauty of paint, while optical realism is not. Moreover, with mental realism the effect of reality, though not so immediately astonishing, lasts longer. For whatever reason, modern painters seem to have arrived at the conclusion that the abiding conviction is more important than the immediate illusion of reality, and that the intrinsic properties of paint are worth cultivating.

Illusion as a means to reality, however, still haunts the minds of some good painters—chiefly those who have been influenced by the French Impressionists. Mr. Wilson Steer is a characteristic example. It would be as absurd to deny the interest and beauty of his paint as to deny the truth of his representations. But, to a certain extent, the one does get in the way of the other. This is what simple people really mean when they say that pictures like Mr. Steer's look "unfinished." They do not succeed in getting the focus in which the rough paint becomes the object represented. The painter has every right to claim his focus; all I would point out is that if he gave up the attempt at optical illusion he would not need it. Mr. Wolmark, for example, paints rougher and thicker than Mr. Steer, but because he makes no attempt at illusion the simplest person, though he may, and often does, dislike Mr. Wolmark's pictures on other grounds, is never bothered by his paint. Feeling instinctively that he is looking not at an attempted illusion but at an exercise in paint, he accepts its roughness and thickness as part of the game. If you see a person screwing up his eyes in front of one of Mr. Wolmark's pictures, it is not because he is really trying to get the focus, but because he thinks, mistakenly, that it is the proper thing to do. But I have seen old ladies, incapable of affectation, screwing up their eyes in front of one of Mr. Steer's.

This is not to say that Mr. Wolmark is a better painter than Mr. Steer—far from it—but only that he treats the business of painting more frankly as painting. It would be a great day for painting if everybody understood and agreed that, though subtler, it is just as much a handicraft in a particular material as working in coloured silks or wools. Nobody is bothered by the obvious stitches in a piece of embroidery. Perfectly aware of this truth, good painters like Mr. Steer are nevertheless trying to serve the God of things as they are—in the substance of paint—and at the same time to pacify the God of things as they look like; and, not unnaturally, the paint protests.

In art we should learn to distinguish clearly between magic and conjuring-tricks. The essence of magic is that the spell, formula, incantation, or whatever you like to call it, need bear no apparent relationship to the effect produced. You do or say something—wave a wand, scatter hemp-seed, or say "Open Sesame" or "Abracadabra"—and something happens. Conjuring-tricks have to be convincing all the time. You may say that magic is not possible in art. My retort is that it is done every day in outline drawing. The lines of pencil or ink are not in the least like anything in nature, but because the spell is familiar nature happens in the mind of the observer. It is only in a substance that really can be made to look like nature, such as oil paint, that the artist is tempted to help out magic with conjuring-tricks.

The remedy is greater confidence in the magic of paint. It is because they resist the temptation, because with insufficient faith in magic they will not descend to conjuring-tricks, that painters

like Mr. Steer puzzle the public. Painters who embrace conjuring-tricks whole-heartedly, sacrifice paint entirely to illusion, are sure of their reward. For the public, accepting the illusion, is quite capable of seeing when the trick is cleverly performed, and will even take a delight in pointing out how it has been taken-in by the painter. Mr. Sargent is too sincere an artist to attempt illusion for any reason except that he believes it to be the best way of conveying reality; but there can be no doubt that he owes much of his reputation with the general public to sleight of hand. You will often see people examining one of his pictures at different distances, and hear them exclaiming how wonderful it is that meaningless dabs of paint resolve themselves into a portrait that "stands out from the canvas." From their conversation it is quite evident that they suppose, approvingly, the painter to have done it that way in order to show off his skill. And not long ago a well-known art critic praised a portrait by Mr. Sargent for the accident it might share with washing on a clothes-line or the stump of a tree of being mistaken for a real person.

Such a misunderstanding of the real nature of art could not happen with the work of an artist who believes whole-heartedly in the magic of paint; who puts the onus of truth not upon illusion but upon the direct appeal of form and colour and substance. His design encloses recognisable shapes of nature, but it has a life and meaning of its own that would still be potent if they were unrecognisable, and does persist in the mind when they are forgotten; as the rhythm of a verse carries beyond the words, and haunts the memory when they have passed from it. His forms may be close to the forms of nature, as in a portrait by Titian or a landscape by Claude, or far from them, as in an Egyptian papyrus or a Byzantine mosaic; but they exist by their own vitality and not only by suffrage of what they resemble. His red and blue and green do their work as red and blue and green, owing hardly more to their plausibility to appearance than do the words "red" and "blue" and "green" to the blood or the sky or the grass with which they happen to be associated. It is only when reality is established by such means that paint can be given full freedom. Released from fawning upon appearances, in a design conceived in its own substance, it can be spread thick or thin, rough or smooth, with or without modulation, without any risk to truth or beauty. In a homely phrase, it has no appearances to keep up. I had to visit the Prado Museum, the shrine of Velazquez, to understand that Titian was the greater painter. With all his gifts the Spaniard had not freed his imagination from the tyranny of the eye as an optical instrument; and therefore, nobly as he used his paint, he still used it to keep up appearances. He could not trust paint to deliver its own message.

Chapter VII.

ONE significant result of renewed confidence in paint is the gradual disappearance of the quite arbitrary distinction between pictorial and decorative painting. In any modern exhibition there will be a number of works that it would be difficult to assign exclusively to either class, and this is natural. Once paint is trusted, it becomes evident that decoration is compatible with truth and reality with formal design. Nor is the capacity for illustration or story-telling diminished by decorative treatment, but rather the reverse. The Bayeux Tapestry, one of the most complete and detailed pieces of illustration in the world, is highly decorative; and stained-glass windows are proverbially "storied." Both tapestry and windows, it may be observed, are done in materials of pronounced character, so that the artists were not tempted to crab their

decoration or confuse their story-telling with undue realism in the optical sense.

The distinction between decorative and pictorial art was never more valid than that between formal and programme music. In a sense all music is formal, and all is descriptive or dramatic; and just as any distinction would be ridiculous between the men who play or compose one or the other, so it seems likely that the abolition of the arbitrary distinction between pictorial and decorative painting will help to bring back the old healthy relationship between the studio and the workshop. As a matter of fact it has begun to do so, and a great many pictorial artists practise not only decorative painting, but some other handicraft as well. Except among the Morris group such a thing was extremely rare in the nineteenth century. With the rehabilitation of the paint-pot "brother brush" has taken on a new and wider meaning.

But the good influence of the paint-pot does not end there. It is often said that the "subject picture" is no longer painted; but that is only a half-truth. It is painted differently. Trusting more to paint and design, the modern painter does not need to make such elaborate compositions, or to juggle so elaborately with light and circumstances for story-telling, illustrative, anecdotal, or dramatic purposes. Unlike the realistic painter, he does not have to pretend that the elements conspired to bring the principal figures into relief.

This is particularly true of the kind of subject that is called "imaginative." The typical imaginative picture of the nineteenth century was allegorical in form. It was a genuine attempt to interpret life in larger and more universal terms than is possible by the representation of particular scenes or incidents, but the meaning was illustrated by what the figures were wearing, carrying, or doing, rather than by painting them in a more expressive way. You were expected to read the meaning as you read the meaning of a charade; and success was mainly a matter of costume and symbolical "properties." Allegories are still painted, but as a rule the modern painter tries to go deeper. Feeling that everything in ordinary life has a universal significance if only it can be found, and being no longer haunted by the bugbear of truth to nature in the optical sense, he adds nothing to life in the way of "properties," but rather tries by simplification, and even distortion, to rid form and gesture of the accidental and transitory, and lay stress upon the essential and permanent. It may be only a family at supper, or a group of women washing clothes, but the attempt, at any rate, is to bring out what may be called the sacramental meaning of the scene. Released from bondage to appearance, paint loyally responds by revealing more of its beauty and character in proportion as it is treated in a large and simple way; and so improvement in design and in craftsmanship go hand in hand. In this better meaning of the words, and with the widest individual differences in conception and treatment, George Clausen, Augustus John, William Orpen, Charles Sims, William Strang, the late John Currie, Cayley Robinson, William Shackleton, Randolph Schwabe, Jack B. Yeats, Jacob Kramer, Charles Shannon, Spencer Watson, Mark Gertler, J. D. Fergusson, Maxwell Armfield, Walter Bayes, C. R. W. Nevinson, James Pryde, William Rothenstein, and Joseph Edward Southall—to take a list of names almost at random—may all be called painters of imaginative subject pictures.

The new spirit in landscape is remarkable. Briefly, the picturesque is dead, or at any rate hopelessly discredited, as an artistic motive. Unknown in classical times, it was essentially a passing phase; the invention of an age of unbelief, a confession of imaginative bankruptcy, a fillip to the jaded eye as truly as the savour of decomposition is a fillip to the jaded palate. At risk of being tiresome, I cannot help dwelling on the moral significance of the picturesque. Nothing could have been less democratic, more

R. Schwabe

"The Gravediggers"

THERE is something of grandeur in this picture. It is achieved by significant gesture and the massive treatment of the drawing.

Plate XVII.

W. E. Von Glehn

"Fishing"

BY an accomplished member of the school of modern painters, headed by Mr. Sargent, who aim at combining naturalistic illusion with pleasant colour and free brush-work.

Plate XVIII.

Horace Brodzky

A GOOD attempt at "monumental design." By extreme simplification the forms of the cats are made more permanent, more memorable, than if they had been treated naturalistically.

Plate XIX.

P. Bertieri

"Etude"

OBVIOUSLY the work of a craftsman who delights in the material qualities of the subject, the pearly flesh being painted with keen enjoyment.

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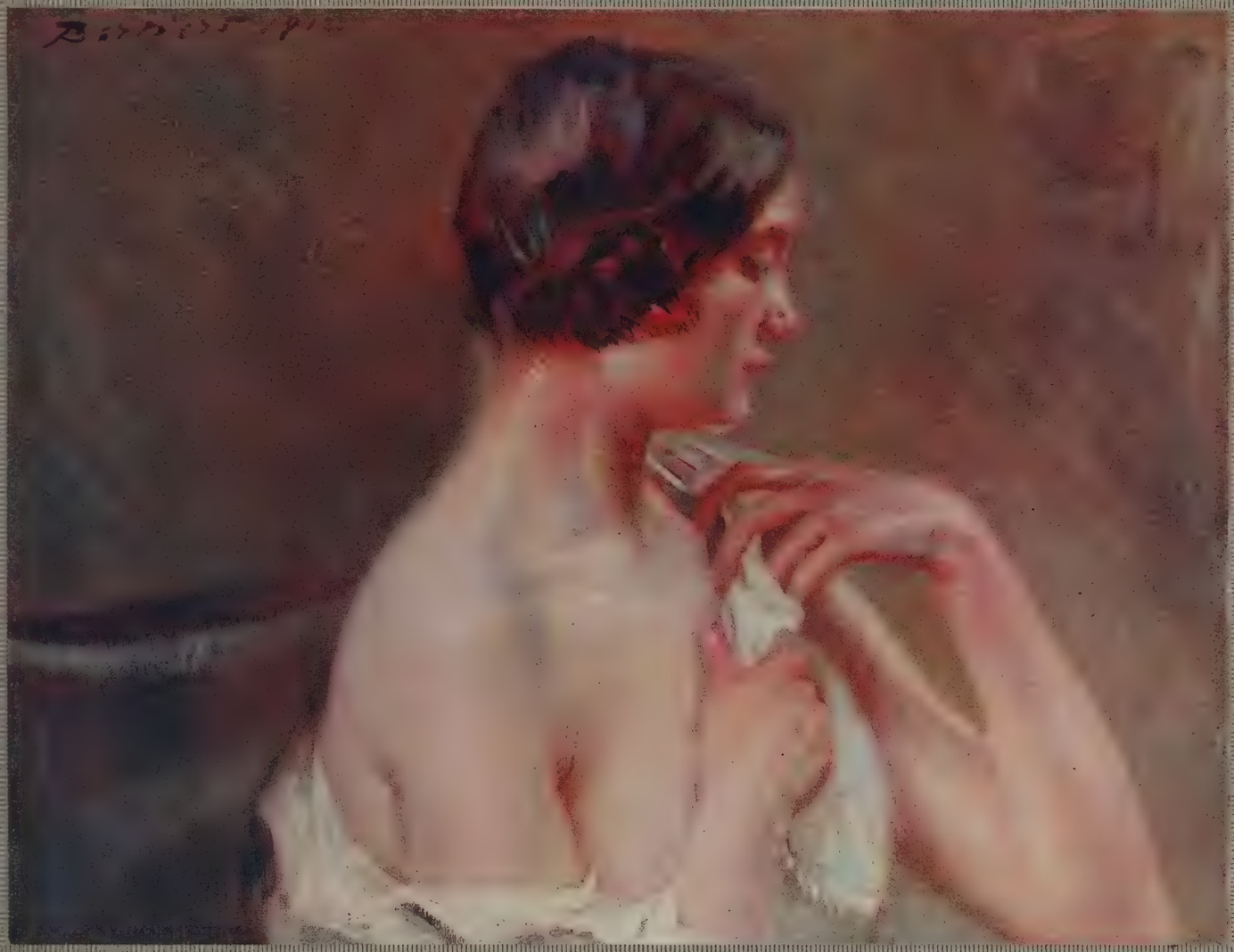

Plate XX.

Fred Foottet

" Richmond Bridge "

A POETICAL interpretation by a painter who combines the methods of Impressionism with attention to design. He is particularly successful with twilight.

Plate XXI.

Plate XXI.

Julien Lemordant

"Paysan Breton dans les Goémons"

A GOOD example of the harmony between drawing and colour which is often neglected by artists. As in stained glass, which the picture recalls, the strong colour demands a corresponding boldness and simplicity in the treatment of form.

Plate XXII.

Philip Connard

"Summer"

BY one of our keenest painters, in the sense of translating the visual elements of a scene into skilful brushwork. A painting like this depends a great deal upon absolute truth of values, the drawing being of necessity left to take care of itself.

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Plate XXIII.

Frank Salisbury

"The Kiss"

THE work of an artist who is not ashamed to confess his admiration for the great English portrait painters of the eighteenth century. He has succeeded in acquiring something of their largeness of style.

Plate XXIV.

hostile to the spirit of brotherhood. Since the picturesque results from ruin and decay, it meant that you were dependent for your æsthetic pleasure upon the moral and material disabilities of your fellow creatures. If you were a humane person, as many of the picturesque painters undoubtedly were, there was necessarily a breach between your social and your æsthetic opinions. You prized as a painter what you deplored as a man, and nothing contributed more surely and directly to the separation of art from life, to the prejudice of both. By far the least injurious cultivation of the picturesque was the extreme form of it which concerned itself with classical ruins. Since life no longer depended upon them, they could be exploited for the purpose of painting without the inhumanity implied in painting insanitary cottages or neglected fields.

There could hardly be a stronger proof of the materialism of the last half of the nineteenth century than its identification of art and poetry with the picturesque. It is significant that the view was supported by the philosophers and men of science. In one of the essays of Herbert Spencer, or it may be in his *Autobiography*, there is a passage in which, while praising improved methods of farming, he regrets, on sentimental and artistic grounds, the disappearance of untidy hedgerows and rambling footpaths. From the context it is quite clear that he regarded efficiency and beauty as incompatible. Nobody would deny that many modern ways of doing things are ugly, and the cause of ugliness; but no modern philosopher worthy of the name would admit that the reason is that they are efficient. On the contrary, he would lay stress on the truth that ugliness is always a sign of comparative inefficiency. The modern artist would go further, and claim that anything really efficient is beautiful essentially, and not merely in certain lights and conditions—"in the dusk with the light behind it." He would subscribe to George Meredith's condition as the most practical test of anything in human life: "Is it accepted of song?"

It would be interesting to know, by the way, when and why the picturesque heresy began. To judge from the backgrounds of Italian pictures and the miniature illustrations to illuminated Books of Hours, the earlier painters delighted in emphasising the spick-and-span tidiness of cultivated nature.

Closely connected with the picturesque heresy was the fear of machinery and the machine-made that did so much to hinder the good work and teaching of Ruskin and his followers. It is true that the immediate effect of machinery is to separate man from the materials he uses, but in the end it will bring him back again by new paths with a larger and more sensitive control. Besides, the process of separation did not begin with what we now understand as "machinery." The first man who used a fork instead of his fingers undoubtedly lost something of intimate acquaintance with his food, and the first woman who spun flax with a wheel instead of worrying it with teeth and tongue lost touch with the material to that extent. Having begun machinery in the shape of the spinning-wheel, we must go through with it, making up for loss of manual touch with materials with a keener perception of their properties and possibilities by means of other faculties. Craftsmanship continually ascends from the fingers to the brain, and with a more perfect sense of what is needed to be done machinery simplifies—as it has already simplified in living memory.

The other objection to machinery—monotony in production—has neither intellectual nor æsthetic respectability. Given a clear vision of the conditions, there is as much beauty in uniformity as in variety; and it is doubtful if a person who fails to appreciate the one has really felt the other. Anything that is needed for the same purpose by millions of people is not only practically, but æsthetically, the better for uniformity. Small variations in the capitals

of a Gothic building are a delight, but they would be a defect in the girders of a railway station; and to give up railway stations is a counsel not of perfection but of despair.

All this fuss about machinery and the machine-made, for and against, is really a shirking of design. No machine ever invented will ever be able to design; so that the first business of the artist remains exactly the same, the only difference being in the tools and instruments at his command. Michelangelo would have taken a pride in designing for steam-hammers. The commonest example of shirking design is in the arts of reproduction, such as engraving. The more a man relies on minor variations of printing for personal expression, the less likely he is to perfect his design—which is his real channel of expression. So long as books were written "by hand" the personal variation counted; but with the invention of printing, uniformity, in the same fount of type, became an artistic virtue. There is plenty of scope for variety in the founts of type that may be designed, and in the arrangement of the page, but printing quâ printing is, and should be, a matter of mechanical accuracy. Penny stamps are better æsthetically for being all alike; the opportunity for variation comes in the differences between them and twopenny and threepenny stamps.

But there is no need to multiply examples. The root of the whole trouble is mixing up machinery with life, confusing truth with accuracy. Art has nothing to do with accidents, and machinery is as irrelevant to life as clocks are to the sun; but you do not flatter the sun by putting your clocks wrong, and the man who misses trains is as tiresome practically, intellectually, and æsthetically as the man who times his walking for pleasure with a stop-watch.

Of course the fear of machinery was only the other side of making too much of it; and it is amusing to note that its rejection by artists was followed by exploitation on equally mistaken grounds. For a time, at any rate, there was a fashion in painting factories and foundries, and it was quite the correct thing to talk about the romance of industry and the new artistic motives that machinery had brought into life. But, upon analysis, the romance of industry was merely the noise and smell of it, and it was not machinery, but its defects and failures, that supplied the new motives. The real meaning of machinery, as an aid to accuracy and precision in departments of life where they are practical and artistic virtues, was just as much ignored as when it was damned by Ruskin and Morris; and the new pictures were nothing more than studies of wasted energy as expressed in smoke, steam, and rubbish-heaps. The last thing that a painter thought of doing was to paint machinery in a way that expressed its construction and function. He must fling it into violent perspective, surround it with the figures of men whose actions and gestures advertised its inefficiency, and fasten upon it some fanciful resemblance to an animal. "Very like a whale" might serve as a title for many pictures of this period. The new fashion, in fact, was nothing more than the picturesque transferred from bad farming to bad industrialism.

No doubt a weakness for the picturesque still survives in art, but, on the whole, our painters do try to accept the conditions of modern life for just what they are worth and what they express. They neither avoid machinery nor go out of their way to glorify it for what it is not—a substitute for life—but take or leave it and its effects as they happen or do not in the landscape. When a member of the Cumberland Market Group paints a Tube station he tries to make it as much like a Tube station as possible, neither shirking its lines nor toning down its colours; but he keeps it in quite friendly relations with the blue sky above and the green trees beside it. He paints it, in fact, in the same spirit in which he uses it, which is about as near to reality in art as any man can go. The essence of the picturesque heresy was to pretend that you

valued a thing more or less on artistic grounds than you did on practical grounds; so that, one way or the other, you had to paint with your tongue in your cheek.

The whole activities of the Cumberland Market Group, now merged in the London Group, are typical of the new spirit in landscape painting. Within the group there are interesting differences, and the name "Neo-Realist" adopted by some of the members seems to be an apology rather than a description, since each of them works in a definite convention, if only of colour; but the characteristics of unprejudiced regard for nature and loyalty to paint are common to the group. In general they paint what is nearest to hand—London streets and squares and suburban back-gardens—but not in any spirit of narrow provincialism. Indeed, the belief expressed is that for the purpose of landscape painting there is no real distinction between London, the suburbs, the country, and abroad; that nothing, not even the romantic "view," is artistically common or unclean. If they paint a mountain they neither belittle nor fawn upon it, and if they paint a factory they show the same interested appreciation of its real character and purpose that an early Italian showed with a wine-press or a threshing-floor. Consequently, in spite of all the differences of period, subject-matter, and climate, their works are far more like those of an Italian city "school," of Padua or Siena, than was anything that came between. The reason is not that they are painted in the same manner, but in the same spirit of matter-of-fact sincerity; and, as a general rule, when a critic says that Mr. So-and-so has adopted a "primitive" manner, he only means that Mr. So-and-so is painting with a proper disregard of anything but his job and his materials. There is no indication that any artist up to the end of the fifteenth century cared a toss about truth to nature. All he cared about was truth to his conception of reality; and in that conception the evidence of his eyes counted far less than his religious beliefs, his notions of natural history, and his practical familiarity with the activities represented. From the early seventeenth to the late nineteenth century landscape painting was a sort of propaganda to advertise all sorts of pathetic fallacies about nature, and we are only now beginning to look at landscape with the eyes of faith again.

The difference between the old and the new-old spirit in landscape might be expressed as that between extensive and intensive culture. The picturesque painter needed a lot of land for the business, and to go a long way to find it, and his crop of impressions was bulky in amount rather than rich in quality. And if you come to think about it, there was a connection between the picturesque heresy in art and the ownership and use of land at any time since the dissolution of the monasteries, which was the end of really practical agriculture, at any rate in England. For landowners, poets, and painters alike rural life became a sort of raw material to be exploited for the pleasure of the few, or to point a moral or adorn a tale. Even the pictures of that very great painter, George Morland, illustrate a sort of æsthetic slumming.

The modern landscape painter is content with a small-holding, and he would as lief that it should be a market-garden as a rolling park or a desolate moor. He knows that if he cannot find nature in Putney he will not find her in Cumberland or Cornwall; that the gestures of trees and the shapes of sky between are as significant on Primrose Hill as in Wye Valley. And if you get to the bottom of it you will see that the change in attitude, in both land policy and landscape painting, was not so much due to a change of theories in the abstract as the automatic result of a renewed or revived appreciation of the stuff; human nature in the one case, and paint in the other. It is recognised that land must be ordered in terms of human nature, and that landscape must be painted in terms of paint. The result in both cases is a more intensive culture.

Once you begin to go over the face of landscape in terms of paint instead of with some poetical gospel or in some doctrine of truth to nature, you find that very little subject-matter suits your purpose, that one sort is almost as good as another, and that it need not be sophisticated in the interests of art. The reality of bricks and mortar, park railings, pruned bushes, and garden rollers, when you find it through paint, is new and strange enough for any person of real imagination. Nowhere is this truth better illustrated, by the way, than in the landscapes of the brothers John and Paul Nash. They choose habitually the most ordinary scenes—market-gardens or orchards as often as not—but by insisting on real as distinct from optical character they get more of the romance and poetry of nature into a few rows of raspberry-canes and a yard or two of wire-netting than the late Mr. MacWhirter would have got into a Highland deer-forest.

Not that the modern landscape painter has any need to avoid scenes that are naturally romantic. On the contrary, one effect of being firmly grounded in paint and immune from the picturesque is to free him from the priggish dread of made "views" that was characteristic of landscape painting since the days of Turner. Unlike the Impressionist, he has no reason to be touchy about subject interest. Better than any of his forerunners, at any rate since the Middle Ages, he can afford to paint a spade a spade without fear of being called literal. As a matter of fact, you cannot be literal if you deal with anything in terms of the medium. The result is that modern landscape is both extremely emancipated and remarkably full of the subject interest that appeals to the ordinary person. Just as the modern subject painter can tell a story with all the more point and detail for not worrying about truth to nature in the optical sense, so the modern landscape painter can afford to be minutely topographical—and topography is a very real interest.

One has only to run over a list of modern landscape painters to recognise how wide is the range of subject interest. Arnesby Brown, George Clausen, C. J. Holmes, D. Y. Cameron, Wilson Steer, Maresco Pearce, Charles M. Gere, Sydney Lee, Harold Gilman, Charles Ginner, Robert Bevan, D. Murray Smith, and David Muirhead, to take names at random, have very little in common in sentiment or technical methods; but through loyalty to paint they are all able to give you a much fuller budget of information about nature than would have been possible to either the picturesque or the Impressionist painters. Apart from any question of expression or decoration, then, the substitution of truth to paint for truth to nature as a conscious aim has enabled the painter to respond more fully to ordinary human interests. It sounds paradoxical, but it is true. To put it into a sentence, you can learn more about places and natural history at the London Group or the New English Art Club than you can at the Academy. I do not say that these are primary objects of painting, I merely point out that loyalty to the paint-pot enlarges the illustrative and informative scope of art. But to anybody who has considered either the art of the Chinese or the art of the Middle Ages in Europe, the truth must be obvious.

Chapter VIII.

MODERN portrait painting has not quite recovered from the misunderstanding about photography. This is natural enough because it is in portraiture that the two arts are most commonly employed upon the same subject. The mistake is in supposing that they are therefore in competition. They are not, and, except commercially, never could be, any more than a phonographic record and a biographical study of the same

person are in competition. It is true that so long as portrait painting or drawing was the only way of securing an accurate record of a person's appearance, the painter had to burden expression with a great many facts; but even then he had the privilege of translating the facts into terms of his medium, and not the least merit of a great many portraits of the past—Holbein's portrait drawings are good examples—is precisely in that translation. Only by the grossest misuse of words could a Holbein drawing be called photographic.

Painters do not seem to have grasped the entire irrelevancy of photography all at once. Misled by the superficial and purely accidental likeness between painting and photography, some of them abandoned their art and tried to meet photography on its own ground. The results were larger, and coloured instead of "plain," but in most other respects they were vastly inferior to photographs—as they were bound to be. Phonographic records of the human voice are capable of great improvement, but they are not to be beaten "by hand." The simple fact that a photograph "takes itself" ought to be enough to discourage all human attempts to rival the camera in its own field of activity. Still haunted by the competition idea, some painters tried to dodge it by doing photographic things in elaborately unphotographic ways: by arranging the subject in situations and lights inconvenient or impossible to photography, by representing the facts inaccurately or extravagantly, or by leaving most of them out and putting in the rest in a broad, loose, and even sketchy manner. These diversions might be compared to the verbal tricks with which a man tries to avoid a literal effect in writing: looseness of construction, jocularity, or the use of slang. "Slangy," indeed, would be a fair description of a good many portraits produced in evasion of photography. It was all to no purpose, of course, because a portrait may be a gross caricature or without a single recognisable feature, and still be essentially photographic in vision and treatment.

The real answer to the question: "Wherein does painting differ from photography?" lurked in the paint-pot all the time. You cannot use paint characteristically and with full regard for all its properties for the purpose of literal accuracy in representation, though you can use it for the purpose of truth. If you ask, "What sort of truth?" the answer is the sort of truth that is indicated by subjective vision, a flexible implement, and a fluent and plastic material of almost unlimited range in colours, each of which has an emotional as well as a descriptive potency; that is to say, truth of expression.

On the whole the portraits produced in evasion of photography were less admirable than those that tried to beat it on its own ground. That was a forlorn hope, but it compelled a man to honesty and thoroughness, and to a certain mechanical fidelity in drawing. Moreover, though it suppressed painting, in the sense of handling paint freely, it still allowed the painter one obvious advantage over photography: decorative colour. This, by the way, is one of the distinguishing characteristics of good pre-Raphaelite portraits. People often say that they look "too bright." What they mean is that they are drawn and modelled in the spirit of literal accuracy, and coloured in the spirit of emotional truth. It is a queer reflection on human nature that the man who would rather die than summarize, or, as he would say, "falsify," a bit of drawing will go cheerfully to the extreme limits of even imaginative truth in colour. He says, properly, that he "feels it" that way; but it never seems to occur to him that he has the same privilege and—if he is loyal to the substance as well as the colour of pigment—the same duty in his treatment of form.

The association, I will not admit the competition, between painting and photography in portraiture is so close and critical that I shall not apologise for labouring the distinction in order to

make it clear. For this purpose it is an advantage to go outside art and appeal to life. The present, with its terrible toll of young lives, is a good time for honesty in disregard of all æsthetic preferences, real or affected. Is there anybody who, robbed of a son, brother, lover, or friend, and given the choice between a painting and a photograph as the sole memorial, would not choose the photograph? Or, to take a less harrowing illustration, who would not cheerfully sacrifice all the painted portraits of Shakespeare for one authentic photograph, supposing such a thing were possible?

It seems to me that the obvious answer implies no doubt or criticism of the truth of painting. Nor is it that in the face of grief or of overwhelming interest in the personality of the subject art goes to the wall. It is a question of the sort of truth desired. Waiving all æsthetic opinions, there is an instinctive recognition that the sort of truth needed as an aid to memory, or as a sop to overwhelming curiosity, is better supplied by the photograph than by the painting. The sort of truth conveyed by the painting is already established in the heart; the character of the beloved, the poetic personality of Shakespeare, these are called up in imagination by the mere mention of the name. They never can be forgotten. It is the little accidents of feature, the irregularities, the irrelevancies, the hundred and one details of bodily appearance, that need renewal or acquaintance by means of the pictured likeness. They may have been "noticed" in life, but they were dulled by very familiarity; and it is a fact that we are more conscious of them in strangers than in intimates. In the case of Shakespeare, of course, they were never known to us, and we cannot get them from any painting or any written description. Making every allowance for the defects and limitations of photography, it is just these pricks to memory or imagination that the camera so perfectly provides.

What we instinctively desire in the painted portrait is not so much an aid to memory as a memorial in the sense of a tribute to affection, to genius, to beauty, to character, or to common worth. Truly you have to dig deep into human consciousness to find the essential, the ultimate meaning of art. In the end all art is praise of the Creator or of His works, and the truth is nowhere more securely established than in portraiture. Graven images were forbidden because the God of the Hebrews was a jealous God; and it is not extravagant to say that the prohibition ceased to apply when art became a praise of the Creator through the creature. In all real art, as distinct from imitation of appearance, God is praised in the material as He is praised in the dance or the sound of timbrels; and love being likest God, it is natural and right that the beloved creature should be praised; not flattered, least of all with the flattery of imitation; but through and by the materials and methods of art in their own character and language.

The instinctive demand for authenticity of substance runs through the whole history of art, from the stone set up or flung upon the cairn of the chieftain to the ivory and gold of the miniature and its frame. The beloved or the honoured must be praised in something definite; there must be a sacrifice, and a sacrifice according to ritual. The magical powers of the artist are hired as the sacred powers of the priest are hired in a Requiem.

Often the best evidence of what art really means to the human mind is to be got from lowly sources. The man who, having asked the painter what were the two most expensive colours, decided: "Then I will be painted in crimson lake and my wife in ultramarine," was prompted by something more than pride in wealth. The personal application was vulgar enough, but the principle was artistically sound. He wanted himself and his lady to be praised in crimson lake and ultramarine. Again, pages of argument about the difference between painting

and photography would not define it more clearly than the pride of simple persons in being done "by hand." It is incredible that they should suppose it to be done more truthfully, for simple folk have an exaggerated belief in the truthfulness of photography. Nor is the craving for flattery. No, it is the devotion of special skill and special materials to the purpose that pleases them. They speak of an "oil painting" with superstitious reverence, and in their secret minds they believe, correctly, that the artist will see and make evident something beyond the reach of any camera. It is human and not mechanical justice that they want done to them; above all it is an interpretation of what they really are under all the accidents of appearance. In reality there is very little difference between what they want of the portrait painter and what they want of the "handwriting expert," and it is all expressed in the secret longing of every child: "If they could only see me as I really am!" The expert's reading must be put down in something permanent, and, symbolically at any rate, there could be no better tribute to a man from his fellow citizens than "his portrait in solid oils."

These may seem trivial illustrations, but it is only when ordinary people are taken off guard that you get at their real æsthetic convictions; and art, by your leave, is based upon the real æsthetic convictions of ordinary people. It broadens and deepens in both power and influence in proportion as more and more of them are embodied, and as they are completely and comfortably embodied, though there may be, and often is, a temporary bewilderment of the public while artists are feeling their way to a more potent formula, a fuller synthesis of ideas that are recognised to be common property the moment they are adequately expressed. This is only another way of saying that the chief business of the artist is to interpret people to themselves.

The difference between portrait painting and photography, then, rests finally upon the fact that human nature wants them for entirely different reasons and purposes. But the rapid perfection of photography at a time when, beguiled by mastery over appearances, painting had rather a slack hold upon its proper business of expression, was bound to be disturbing and confusing. On the one hand the camera set up an entirely false though plausible standard of reality, and on the other portrait painters did not see at once that photography was relevant to their art only in so far as it relieved them of a certain responsibility which had hitherto honourably burdened expression. It might be compared to the one-time responsibility of the lyrical or dramatic poet to be also the precise and accurate historian.

Therefore it is not surprising if a good many of the portraits in a modern exhibition may still be classed as attempts, equally mistaken, to rival or to evade the photographic standard of truth. No genuine effort in art, even if mistaken, is altogether fruitless, and some good results of the effort to better photography are increased command of the paint-brush, greater economy of means, keener observation of character as revealed in feature and gesture, appreciation of costume, and invention in the collection and arrangement of "properties," often with a distinct bearing on character. Painting is a mixed business, and while standing out for expression as the ideal it would be foolish to despise the amenities and resources of picture-making.

And, little by little, expression is coming back even into portraiture. Already the more vulgar excesses of mere representation have practically disappeared from our exhibitions. Portraits no longer "stand out from their frames," and the accident which a painted portrait may share with washing on a clothes-line of being mistaken for a real person is no longer hailed as an artistic virtue. Every now and then, too, you come upon a portrait that is in the true tradition of portraiture, established long before photography

Thomas Derrick

"The Judgment of Paris"

AN interesting experiment in decorative design in the classical manner. In the treatment of the figures there is a deliberate avoidance of obvious grace, with a repetition of profiles, as one finds on a Greek vase.

Plate XXV.

Ignacio Zuloaga

"Spanish Girl"

THIS is by the greatest living Spanish painter, who combines the characteristic realism of his nation with a remarkable power of design. He delights in bold patterns, and his brushwork is extraordinarily firm and inclusive. Seldom are character and decoration so evenly balanced in the same painter.

Plate XXVI.

K. Ishibashi

"Peonies"

HERE we have the welcome survival of native instinct for design and expressive workmanship under Western training. Everything is done in a sort of artistic shorthand that leaves out nothing essential.

Plate XXVII.

Charles H. Shannon, A.R.A.

"Tibullus in the House of Delia"

HOMAGE to the great Venetians, Titian in particular, is here frankly confessed. But the picture is not an imitation; it is inspired by the same passionate love of beauty—of sumptuous women, rich fabrics, delicate glass, and gleaming metal. The woman has a mind and soul as well as a body, and the vigour of the design prevents the sensuous elements from cloying.

Plate XXVIII.

A. Wolmark

A GOOD piece of craftsmanship in paint. One would say that for once a decorative artist had tried to see how close he could keep to the facts of nature without sacrificing the quality or character of his material.

Plate XXIX.

Augustus John

"The Two Gitanas"

THE work of a master of painting, who sets down tone after tone with the certainty of a finished performer on a perfect instrument. The dark silhouettes of the heads are heartily enjoyed for their decorative value. And with all this purely technical preoccupation, as it appears, the dignity and mystery of the gipsy race is preserved.

Plate XXX.

C. R. W. Nevinson

"La Mitrailleuse"

A FINE example of artistic sympathy between subject and treatment. It shows how realistic painting can be made even more intense by intelligent emphasis. The compact design and the angular treatment of shadows enhance the effect of iron determination at a critical moment.

Plate XXXI.

W. Russell Flint

"Lip Salve"

AN exercise in carefully considered design. The form of the head-dress is distinguished in itself, and the eye follows with peculiar satisfaction the outline from nape to shoulder. Everything is "placed" with great discretion.

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was invented, but which, at the same time, takes full though modest advantage of the new freedom which photography has so happily defined: the freedom to concentrate upon interpretation and translation, and leave information to be taken for granted.

It is noteworthy that such portraits are not as a rule vague or indefinite in treatment. On the contrary, they seem quietly to assert the independence of painting by accepting a full and explicit scheme of representation. They show that detail, in itself, has nothing whatever to do with "photographic" character. Nor has decision of drawing. The drawing in such portraits is often extremely hard, approaching the linear treatment that gives such enduring interest to the portraits of the Clouets and Holbein, and the statement of character is often minutely rendered. But the drawing is drawing, and not a mere copying of shapes, and the detail is used for expression and decoration, and not merely as "facts" to convince the eye. Even in the special field of miniature painting there is a definite return to the manner of the old illuminators, thus countering the bad influence of the photographic standard where it was most dangerous, and at the same time giving legitimate scope to the most precious taste in decorative colour.

In subject pictures, in landscapes and in portraits, then, there may be observed in different degrees the same tendency: to confide in paint and frankly to accept the modifications of appearance that are suggested by its characteristic use in the expression of reality. As we know, the modifications are sometimes wilful rather than necessary, but, as a rule, they are not, like imitation, incompatible with the character of paint; and the most extreme distortions of nature have generally some real, if ill-digested, ideas behind them. When the ideas are sane and controlled by sound craftsmanship, as in the work of such painters as Augustus John, J. D. Innes, Derwent Lees, Hamilton Hay, J. D. Fergusson, Anne Estelle Rice, Wolmark, C. J. Holmes, C. R. W. Nevinson, and Wyndham Lewis, to cover a sufficiently wide range of styles, the results are not only to give us a sharper sense of reality, but to bring art into a closer and more unaffected relationship with the other activities of the contemporary human mind.

Nor is there any reason for discouragement because the craftsmanship of the rank and file is imperfect. In art, as in life, with a new conception of reality the virtues learnt in the old are often enough not helps but hindrances. A man who has been taught to base his life on keeping up appearances may be excused for many shortcomings when first he tries to live by the truth that is in him. It is natural that he should at first make a clean sweep of good and bad together in the rules of conduct he formerly observed; should fail to recognise that appearances are, after all based on reality, and did at one time coincide with it to the best of man's belief; and that the bare assertion of a principle, however sound, is a different thing from its convincing expression through conduct in a way that our fellow-creatures can understand.

The question how far Academic training is necessary or helpful to the artist is too big to be considered here, but it is broadly true that Academic training, as understood, is pretty well summed up in the words accurate imitation of the appearances of nature. That the accuracy is compromised by something called "style" only complicates the inadequacy of the training. It is only the painter of unusual gifts who can bend his Academic training to the purpose of expression without a disconcerting break somewhere.

To put the difficulty in a simpler form, a man who had spent long and patient years in learning to imitate the noises of a farmyard on the violin could not be expected all at once to employ the instrument effectively in playing a tune. That in his exasperation he should overlook the fact that accuracy of intonation, for whatever purpose,

is accuracy of intonation, and that though the imitation of farmyard noises is not art, their suggestion emphatically is, should surprise nobody. To learn the violin for expression needs harder work than for imitation, but it is work of a different kind; and for a time, at any rate, the former facility will seem a hindrance rather than a help. Exactly the same is true of painting. That our young painters as a body are not shirking the new effort may be gathered from the prevalence in our exhibitions of still-life studies, which might fairly be compared to technical exercises on a musical instrument.

To glance round our modern exhibition again from the point of view of the visitor unlearned in technical matters but capable of comparison, he will be struck by the general effect of simpler, clearer, and more decorative statement, brighter colours, flatter treatment, and more obvious interest in paint. I have left to the last another effect, due partly to all the preceding, but owing something to deliberate intention: a closer and more organic relationship between the pictures and the wall.

The close connection between painting and architecture, if not the dependence of the former on the latter, is not a new discovery by any means; but it is a comparatively new, or newly-revived, ideal in practice, still rather implied than explicitly recognised. Exactly what it means needs some consideration. It does not mean, for example, that pictures need be painted on the wall, or that they should necessarily contain architectural features or even a noticeable proportion of rectangular forms. It means, rather, that some of the elements of building—organised function, disciplined construction and stability—as well as of the subject represented should be present in the picture. The picture, in fact, should be a sort of reconciliation between outdoors and indoors in a substance related to both in its capacity for both representation and construction, very much as domestic life itself at its best is neither a shutting out of the world nor a dragging of crude lumps of it into the house, but a reorganisation of the life of the world in terms and on the scale of private enjoyment. The picture should have manners adapted to the occasion; it is none the worse for being a little mannered. In a well-ordered house life moves in gradations of publicity from the kitchens and bedrooms to the living and entertaining rooms, and through the garden to the street or fields; but there is an organic connection all through with no effect of insincerity at any stage. So in the construction and decoration of the house, from the crude bricks and mortar to the pictures on the walls, there will be a similar progress, fitting and seemly in all its gradations.

Perhaps the meaning will become clearer if we translate vision into hearing. The same speech is used for the crude purposes of business, legal argument, friendly conversation, considered prose, and the last rapture of lyrical poetry. The material—words—is the same all through, though used with varying degrees of refinement and expressiveness. At no stage does, or need, language degenerate into a mere imitation of the thing meant or lose its character of logical structure and consistency. Now the analogy is not perfect because paint is not the same substance or material as bricks or stone, or iron or wood; but it is a substance, and, apart from its use in pictures, it is one of the materials commonly used in building. Of these materials it is the most expressive, but it is always a material with a definite character and logic of its own. It belongs to a class that covers a range and variety of functions that may fairly be compared to the range and variety of functions fulfilled by articulate language.

In the ideal house there would be an organic relationship between the functions of construction, decoration, and expression. The beams and girders might be compared to words as used in business or practical affairs, doors and windows to forms of introduction and illuminating

remarks, furniture and utensils to friendly conversation, formal decoration to considered prose, and pictures to lyrical or dramatic poetry. There would be a hierarchy of functions but a harmony of exercise. Not only that, but each material would have its rising scale of expressiveness according to its powers and capacities. Stone would rise from support in piers and binding in courses to flowering in sculpture, but the character of stone would be preserved all through. Bricks, however employed, would always be let behave in a square way, metal speak sharply, and wood bluntly. Paint would rise from the mere preservation of wood and metal to the forming of pleasant surfaces on its own account, and through decorative patterns to passionately articulate expression in pictures. They would be, so to speak, paint in a lyrical ecstasy, reflecting the heavens but not forgetting its lowlier functions nor its prerogative of articulate instead of merely imitative expression.

By implication rather than explicit claim, modern painting seems to be recognising this organic relationship between the parts and substances of the house. The pictures hang flatter on the walls, and though they still represent appearances, they confess the substance of paint and the right to formal and constructive design determined by its character. They acknowledge a grammar of its own. They bring nature into the house, but, like a man taking off his hat and overcoat, they translate outdoor into indoor terms.

The change in attitude is more evident if we go beyond actual pictures for the moment and remember the other household decorations of the Early Victorians. We laugh at them for treading upon real bunches of roses and papering their walls with realistic imitations of trellised vines. The bad taste is more obvious but not really more absurd than that of the Late Victorians and Edwardians in hanging bits of raw nature on their walls in the form of realistic landscapes. What we instinctively demand, nowadays, in both pictures and decorative hangings and coverings, is that the landscapes and roses and vines should all be translated into a convention that is not arbitrary but determined partly by the nature of the materials used and partly by the fact that they are to be applied to flat surfaces with a structural meaning. In art, as in life, we recognise that we get no nearer to nature by destroying the conventions of either social or material architecture. Paint being a more expressive material than wool or cotton, the convention need not be so pronounced; but there is no art as there is no social life without conventions, and the more frankly they are employed the less they hinder expression.

Chapter IX.

IT is always difficult to turn from the consideration of art to that of artists, particularly when they are still alive. Anything like justice demands a long examination at close range, with chapter and verse at every stage, and in a book like this that is not possible. We must be content with a hasty glance at some contemporary figures, taking the full risk that immediate reputation will sometimes obscure lasting merit. Also it must be conceded frankly that the most contemporary figure in time is not always the most contemporary in character.

If range, productiveness, and versatility be taken into account, probably the most important figure in modern British art is Mr. Frank Brangwyn, A.R.A. Certainly that seems to be the opinion on the Continent; and though the fame of an artist outside his own country does not depend exclusively upon the quality of his work, international reputation is a fair indication of relative size. For one thing Mr. Brangwyn's work, with its merits and defects, is very characteristically English. It is excessively romantic, inclined to be rhetorical, careless in detail—

though patient and thorough in preparation—and resourceful to the point of opportunism. Moreover, in spite of Mr. Brangwyn's Welsh ancestry, it is English in the broad, general sense of the word to a foreigner; the sense in which Fielding, Scott, Stevenson, Dr. Johnson, Dickens, and Mr. G. K. Chesterton are English, though two at least of them were Scotsmen. Technically, no doubt, Mr. Brangwyn owes something to his birth abroad and cosmopolitan training, and he has a distinct affinity with Rubens; but the flourish of his drawing and the fatness of his paint are both in the English tradition. Rowlandson and Morland, to name no others, are both in his ancestry.

The particular significance of Mr. Brangwyn as a modern artist from the point of view of this book is twofold. He transcends in his work all distinctions between pictorial and decorative painting, and, practising a full range of arts and crafts, he shows in every case an intense appreciation of the medium. If he has to make a drawing for a newspaper, his first care is to find out the quality of the actual paper upon which it is to be printed; and when he decorates the Skinners' Hall he finds a response in his paint as well as in his designs to the moral atmosphere and material character of the building. A good part of his inspiration is the inspiration of the stuff, and this really explains what has been regarded as a defect in his treatment of etching. He has invented an etching in which a large scale and a rugged line are parts of the convention.

Allowing for individual temperament, in his artistic attitude to life Mr. Brangwyn belongs to the nineteenth rather than the twentieth century. Take his favourite theme of labour. He paints the labourer with insight and sympathy but with no misgivings about the terms of his employment. Now it is not the business of the artist to preach economics or sociology, but every considerable artist who paints labour does reflect some general ideas on the subject; and Mr. Brangwyn unconsciously flatters the nineteenth-century fallacy that a lot of men on the job is a proof of progress. The twentieth century wants to know more about the job, and who is being exploited. So, too, in his treatment of inanimate nature Mr. Brangwyn is more concerned with picturesque accidents than with essential character, with the drama of light and shade rather than with logic of structure. He paints what somebody called "the pageant of life," and we have come to believe that, not only morally but æsthetically, the important thing is what goes on behind the pageant.

These characteristics of Mr. Brangwyn's art are not quoted as defects—they may be virtues—but only as helping to place it with regard to the time-spirit. Nobody with an eye in his head and a heart in his body can fail to be moved by this great artist's joy in the pageant of life, and its large and passionate expression with unfailing sympathy and knowledge in so many different materials; and on the whole we may be glad that Mr. Brangwyn has kept his illusions. In his gusto for life, delight in action, and keen sense of the romance of the road, with its great moments of buildings and bridges, he might be compared to R. L. Stevenson.

A conception of labour, at any rate of field labour, that is essentially modern is expressed in the work of Mr. George Clausen, R.A. It is not so much, as in J. F. Millet, the tragedy as the mystical significance of man's bondage to the soil. To call it Greek would not be far wrong, for it is the same conception that is expressed in the story of Demeter and Persephone—that forms, indeed, the whole basis of Greek mythology, and, possibly, of all religions. The modern parallel in literature is to be found in the work of Mr. Thomas Hardy; and the work of Mr. Clausen is the more Greek in that with equal fatalism there is not the same protest against Fate. Probably in the modern painter the Greek affinity and the likeness to the modern novelist are both equally unconscious; but his

young women are none the less nymphs and dryads, with sap in their veins and woodland roughness on their cheeks, and none the less true sisters to Tess of the D'Urbervilles and Marty South. The philosophy implied in his work is redeemed from "neo-Pantheism" by being derived from a profound study of the processes of nature and not from literature. Nor does it need persons for its expression, nor any fanciful distortion of the things of nature. A bare corn-field in Essex by Mr. Clausen still hides Persephone, and the dryads of his oaks are felt through very insistence upon the character of the trees. How real and true is this philosophy when distilled from nature has been brought home to us by the war; for now, if ever, we recognise that in the last resort humanity rests upon sowing and reaping, and upon nothing else. Significantly enough, it is Mr. Clausen who has given us the one picture that can be called an imaginative interpretation of the war: "Renaissance," in the Academy of 1915; and the idea expressed in it is the triumph of the silent processes of nature over all the destructive work of man.

Technically an interesting comparison, showing a step forward, can be made between the work of Mr. Clausen and that of the French Impressionists, by whom he has been influenced. A favourite motive of his is one that was often painted by both Monet and Pissarro: the prismatic effect of sunlight coming through foliage into the eyes of the spectator. But whereas the Frenchmen were concerned mainly to get a convincing illusion, Mr. Clausen, with an even more patient skill, is concerned only with the æsthetic, the magical value of the phenomenon. There is no attempt at illusion, the only care from a realistic point of view being to make the effect explain itself. Nor is there any apparent attempt to prove anything—the lurking powder in the jam of most Impressionist work. Allowing the question of truth to be taken for granted, the modern painter need not ignore the character of solid objects in his pre-occupation with light; and, above all, he is free to employ the supreme magic of design. The firm, close-trimmed designs of Mr. Clausen, with something of Cotman's "slow line" in their treatment of natural forms, give to his pictures a remarkable stability. They are truly architectural, and, as he has shown already, the transition to purely decorative painting for him is only a matter of technical application with no change of style or feeling. No painter of his age is more abreast of modern ideas, and in his water-colours, at any rate, he has adopted the more boldly synthetic treatment of nature associated with post-Impressionism.

In the work of Mr. Arnesby Brown, R.A., we have a landscape as free from ulterior motives, theories, and even philosophy, as any painting could be. It is distinctively modern, however, in one important respect. Mr. Brown is not a great designer, but there never was a painter whose designs were more truly inspired by paint. They grow out of the paint-pot as a plant grows out of seed. The organic relationship between his brushwork and his designs gives to his pictures a logic of construction that they would otherwise lack, and, from a technical point of view, detaches them from the nineteenth-century naturalistic school, to which they are related in feeling. Their great value as artistic propaganda is that they help the "nature lover" into an appreciation of painting without his knowing it. The broadly bucolic interest of their subjects makes them all the better for the purpose. Painting in the same counties, with a special turn for cattle, Mr. Brown is our most direct descendant of Constable, and his work is a good illustration of how a traditional form of art may still respond to contemporary influences. For, particularly in his careful studies of twilight, Mr. Brown pursues in a peculiarly well-digested form the interests of later Impressionism, with special reference to the æsthetic rather than the realistic problem. It is a very healthy and thoroughly

British strain that Mr. Arnesby Brown carries forward into contemporary painting.

Mr. William Strang, A.R.A., with his racy comments on contemporary life, realistic in detail but frankly decorative in colour and design; Mr. William Orpen, A.R.A., with his Hogarthian studies of character set out in an exquisite grammar of tone; Mr. D. Y. Cameron, A.R.A., with his emphasis upon mood and structure in landscape; Mr. Adrian Stokes, A.R.A., with his decorative interpretations of mountain scenery; Mr. Charles Sims, A.R.A., with his true fairy-tales, just lacking the courage of complete translation into fairy-like terms called for by his delicious paint; Mr. Charles Shannon, A.R.A., with his brooding absorption in the elements of material beauty; and Mr. Edward Stott, A.R.A., with his poetical and intensely subjective, and therefore contemporary, readings of sacred history, are all artists who, belonging to the past by birth and reputation, carry over into any catholic consideration of modern painting.

A book dealing with modern art is bound to regard the Royal Academy as the shrine of yesterday, though, as the above names will indicate, it has open doors to the present. It is not in the nature of things that an academy shall include the figure, or figures, that express the special significance of the moment.

Certainly it is so in the present case. Of all the considerable figures in modern British art, the one that sums up the present most completely and consistently in both spirit and technical methods is that of Mr. Augustus John. In both spirit and manner he starts "from scratch," owing no more to the past than is indicated by the continuity of human consciousness and the continuous character of the art of painting.

The true significance of Mr. John is obscured rather than otherwise by the fact that he enjoys not only the appreciation of artists but a fashionable reputation and at least a popular notoriety. The reputation and the notoriety depend mainly upon irrelevant considerations: the queerness of some of his types and subjects, and a supposed revolutionary character in his ideas among them. The real importance of Mr. John is due to the fact that, reducing the arts to their essentials, he can draw and paint better than anybody else on the principles that we now recognise as fundamental in the arts of drawing and painting.

Let us try to define what those principles are. In order to do this we must get back to the origins of drawing and painting, not in human history, which would be impossible, but in human practice. Drawing and painting begin with scrawls and daubs; with the child's scrawl on the slate and the child's daub of colour on the print; and the intention in both cases is expressive rather than imitative. The record is not so much of the thing seen as of the thing felt in all the bones and muscles and bowels of the child. It is obvious that the matter cannot rest there. The scrawl and daub must be refined and amplified by knowledge and corrected by observation; but—and this is the crucial thing in the whole business—if they are to remain art there must be no substitution of an imitative for an expressive purpose. Also, though the scrawl and the daub must be brought into a more subtle relation, the elements of drawing and painting must be kept distinct and not confused in a sort of scatter-gun attempt at representation. "Penny plain and twopence coloured" is an æsthetic as well as a commercial distinction.

We know what happens to the ordinary child, and the exhibitions of the Royal Drawing Society, with their almost painful evidence of the universal purity of early efforts, provide us with plenty of material for study. Little by little, unless he is almost savagely protected from bad example, the child forgets all about expression in imitation. He learns to make a more or less accurate copy of what he sees or has seen; and the latter efforts are only better than the former in being simpler and more

confined to essentials. Neither convey what the child, or by this time the youth, has felt about the matter in his bones and in terms of the material he is using.

Somebody said the other day that the notion that music has anything to do with the ear is a comparatively modern heresy. I often think that the same is true about the connection between painting and the eye, and that it would be an advantage to art if painters were blind—as Beethoven was deaf. How far the child, under necessary training, can be taught to use his eyes as a channel and refuse them as a critic of reality is a difficult question to answer; but the whole of Eastern art, and particularly Chinese, seems to show that the difficulty disappears in practice; that the pupil can be taught to translate appearance into feeling with the material all the time.

So it is with Mr. John. With all the difference in truth, fulness and refinement between his drawing and painting and the scrawls and daubs of the child there is no change in principle; the aim is always expression, and there is always complete translation of the thing seen into terms of the material employed. I know nothing about his training, but there is no indication that at any stage he corrupted the purity of the child's method with the pride of the eye. Consequently he can apply the method at many different removes from nature; can draw close to or far from appearances; can bring the elements of drawing and painting into close relationship by means of modelling in a realistic portrait, or can expose their separate concerns with careless freedom in a panel study of the figure in landscape. But in the most realistic portrait the contours are translated and not imitated from nature, and there is always a definite notation in the scale of tones used in modelling, with an æsthetic as well as a practical purpose in their sequence and combination. Finally, to strip the business of painting, on the technical side, to the buff, there is nobody who can plant a general tone with the truth and precision of Mr. John. He can do it with the brightest object, an orange scarf in a green field, without making two bites at his cherry. Put there, it stops there, accepting its position in space without the need for any explanatory shading or doctoring of the edges. This, if you come to think of it, is a test of painting in its fundamentals. More than any other modern painter, Mr. John is always in the middle of the note.

In spirit his work is equally, though less obviously, an expression of contemporary ideas. He seems to live habitually on that plane of consciousness between thinking and feeling which is the peculiar playground of the time-spirit as it is the reservoir of creative impulse. He "places" the art of painting somewhere between music and poetry; as more objective than the one and less articulate than the other; which is in accord with modern feeling on the subject. It is the groundwork of landscape, hills and valleys rather than trees or atmospheric effects, and the elementary in human type and gesture, that hold his attention. Often it would be difficult to assign a definite meaning to his pictures, but they always seem to have a meaning, probably beyond his own exposition in words; and the curious thing is that the meaning generally seems to be on the side of what sensitive and more articulate minds are trying to formulate as contemporary gospel. As a rule, when Mr. John stops to think he thinks wrong—or at any rate perversely; and this partly accounts for his attraction for the more sophisticated public. Probably the true explanation of Mr. John is that he is our dumb Platonist in paint, exclusively concerned to express general ideas and feelings as they come to the surface at the bidding of the time-spirit and indifferent to particular contemporary phenomena. His occasional unguarded reflection of earlier painters, such as Botticelli, is rather a proof of

William Orpen, A.R.A.

A MASTERLY piece of painting. The least error in tone would have destroyed the unity of the picture, the material itself being so evenly distributed, with no prominent object to form a centre. Everything is done with great consistency, the different textures and surfaces being indicated without spoiling the uniform quality of the paint. Light is really the subject, although the forms lack nothing of reality.

Plate XXXIII.

G. Hynes

"Chalk Quarries"

THIS picture owes a great deal of its effect to what might be called deliberate awkwardness. In spite of its decorative treatment, it has the "bite" of life, and of modern life, the white background being an excellent expedient to give value to both the colours and the angular gestures of the figures.

Plate XXXIV.

Frank Brangwyn, A.R.A.

"Head of an Old Man"

THIS astonishing work by Mr. Brangwyn reminds us that in youth he studied in Belgium, for it recalls the masterpieces of the early Flemings. Not less remarkable than the technical qualities of the work, the scholarly drawing, and the grave refinement of the colour-scheme, is the sympathetic appreciation of age. It is as if the old man had ceased to live except in memory.

Plate XXXV.

B. Meninsky

"Mother and Child"

THE merit of this picture is in its quiet sincerity. There is no attempt to beautify the models, but by careful reduction to essentials something typical is achieved.

Plate XXXVI.

Ambrose MacEvoy

A Portrait

A CHARACTERISTIC work by a painter who makes the temperament rather than the features of the sitter the subject of his portraits. The result is a sympathetic interpretation of personality. As a painter of charm he is unexcelled.

Plate XXXVII.

Ruth Hollingsworth

"China Ducks"

BY a painter who is wisely content to cultivate a small and definite field. The charm of the picture is in its restraint and appreciation of quality. It is a thing "said" simply and well.

Plate XXXVIII.

G. Spencer Watson

"The Hobby Horse"

THE irresistible joyousness of this painting recalls the poems of Blake. To the imagination of the spectator, as to that of the child, the hobby horse becomes much more real than a living steed.

Plate XXXIX.

Lucien Pissarro

"Sea View, Fishponds"

THIS picture illustrates the further development of Impressionism; faithful presentation of the facts being combined with attention to design. What at first sight appears to be a literal rendering of the scene is full of careful selection and arrangement. The turn of the valley comes at exactly the right moment to carry the eye through the picture.

Plate XL.

his modernity than otherwise, since modern life is full of recognitions of affinities in the past.

Naturally enough, Mr. John is one of the only two contemporary painters who can be said to have founded a school. How far they were or are actual pupils of his I do not know; but the late Mr. J. D. Innes, the late Mr. John Currie, Mr. Derwent Lees, Mr. Leslie Brockhurst, Mr. Harold Squire, Mr. C. J. Holmes, Mr. A. P. Allinson, and several others, have all been at least touched with his influence.

The other contemporary painter who can be said to have founded a school, and with more definite effects, is Mr. Walter Sickert. If Mr. John is our Platonist, Mr. Sickert is emphatically our Aristotelian in paint. The respective degree of realism indicated by the names is paralleled in technical practice. Equally true to paint with Mr. John, in the matter of tone Mr. Sickert prefers to make two or more bites at his cherry; but they are distinct bites, and not a mere mumbling. There is a definite notation in the scale of tones, but, in keeping with a more particular treatment of nature, the intervals are smaller. Correspondingly, it is the particular phenomena rather than the general ideas of our epoch that Mr. Sickert more deliberately sets out to express.

The more I think about Mr. Sickert, the more I am filled with a respect approaching to veneration. With little popular appreciation, though the admiration of all artists, but with perfect urbanity edged with irony, Mr. Sickert goes on adding comment to comment on what may be called, æsthetically at any rate, the seamier side of contemporary life. It would be difficult to imagine more ungrateful material for the painter unless, as Hogarth did and Mr. Sickert does not, he organises his comments to point a moral. And every now and then, in the head of an old Venetian woman, a study of Belgian soldiers, or a landscape, Mr. Sickert shows that a tender sympathy, a passionate enthusiasm, and a lyrical enjoyment of nature are all within his range of emotions. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that he devotes himself to his dustier task from a sense of duty, all the more sincere and self-sacrificing for being disguised as curiosity. Not that the curiosity is not genuine; and indeed Mr. Sickert shows marked affinities with the realistic novelists: with Fielding and, especially, Mr. George Moore. He made, I think, some drawings to *Esther Waters;* at any rate, a good deal of his work is in the spirit of that novel. How much or how little he would claim to derive from Whistler I do not know; but he is made of much sterner stuff. He stands up to nature, and so far from painting her in the dusk with the light behind her, positively prefers the revelations of clear, grey mornings with an East wind blowing.

Mr. Sickert is the "sea-green incorruptible" of modern art. Perhaps his function is to keep a hand on the brake of expression lest art should run away into generalisations before it has made sure of its ground by the study of particulars. Certainly that seems to be his influence upon the band of young men and women who, without exaggeration, owe everything to him. Practically the whole of that section of the London Group which was formerly associated with Camden Town has passed through his hands or sat at his feet; and the more recent development of some of its members shows that his grounding in essentials did no injury to talents of the most various kinds. He might be compared to the Wise Centaur. I firmly believe that when the history of immediately modern art comes to be written, as it cannot be written here, in respect of solid craftsmanship it will be found to owe more to Mr. Walter Sickert than to anybody else.

The most fruitful results of post-Impressionism, in the broader sense, are to be found in the works of the group of painters who at one time called themselves "Fauvistes," comprising Mr. S. J. Peploe, Mr. J. D. Fergusson, Mr. Joseph Simpson, and Miss Anne Estelle Rice;

and in those of Mr. Wyndham Lewis and Mr. C. R. W. Nevinson. In the former the digested principles resolve themselves into emphatic and strongly rhythmical design, simplified and boldly linear treatment of form, and use of bright colour in flat patterns with a decorative purpose and a frank exposition of the substance of paint. Except as implied in these translations, the appearances of nature are not greatly modified. Both Mr. Lewis and Mr. Nevinson tend to a greater abstraction, with a geometrical grammar; the aim being as much to symbolize dynamic energy as to enhance the reality of solid objects. As examples of the complete digestion of new principles, the war paintings of Mr. Nevinson are particularly satisfying. They are comparatively realistic representations reinforced with the logic of energy and structure that is felt by the mind though not perceived by the eye. Other painters who are producing interesting works in the newer conventions are Mr. W. B. Adeney, Mr. Frederick Etchells, Mr. W. Roberts, and Mr. Edward Wadsworth.

Chapter X.

WHEN all has been said, the problem of art is to make a noise like a turnip. As Mr. Punch's lunatic was well aware, the only effective substitute for a real turnip is to create one in the mind of the intended victim; and, being a lunatic, he chose the extreme form of artistic creation—by sound. But sound, smell, shape or colour, the principle is exactly the same; you must catch your rabbit by hypnotic suggestion, by magic, and not by intellectual persuasion.

Of all substitutes for the real turnip the least effective is the realistic imitation. The rabbit looks at it and says: "M'yes, very pretty; but I'm eating grass myself." This is not mere contrariness; it is part of the mystery of mind. For any vital result in art you must hit below the belt of conscious perception. It is not that the human mind—the rabbit of the artistic problem—is not susceptible to reason, but that it is too susceptible. It will take all your reasons and ask for more, and then yawn and go home to tea. The soul of artistic strategy is to kill "Why?" dead on the lips. Otherwise you get something like this. The rabbit looks at the realistic imitation of the turnip and says: "Yes, that looks very like a turnip, but why doesn't it smell or taste or feel like one, or sound like one when you tap it?" Of course there was the immortal Brer Rabbit and the sparrer-grass; but then, if you remember, it *was* real sparrer-grass.

I am not playing with the subject. It is the sober truth that a good painter can suggest, and simultaneously, not only the look but the movements, the sounds, the smells, the general "feel" of a windy day; but he cannot do it by optical accuracy alone. On the contrary, the more accurate the optical impression the more conspicuous will be the tactile, auditory and olfactory impressions by their absence; and you get the effect of looking at the landscape from an hermetically-sealed glass compartment. For a long time I wondered why in front of some realistically-painted landscapes I felt as if my ears were stopped. You can test this any day at the movies, and it is in recognition of the truth that sometimes at the movies the sounds are independently supplied. The painter has to supply them in paint. In practice, and without reasoning it out, he does it by pooling all his impressions, optical, auditory, tactile and olfactory, and painting the net result—his general "feeling" of the scene—and with reasonable skill he makes the observer feel the same.

At all times the general tendency of art has been to abstract the "feeling" from the sum of impressions, and to concentrate its technical powers on finding a formula, a spell, to convey it fully, forcibly and directly. The aim is to

convey directly the "go" of the engine, the "soar" of the kite, the "grin" of the cat; and, moreover, the secret aspiration of art has always been to convey the grin without the cat, or with as little of the cat as may be. And in one art, at any rate, that of music, the aspiration is fulfilled every day. From the nature of his medium, of all artists the musician is most successful in baulking reason, in killing "Why?" dead on the lips; and that, no doubt, is why Mr. Punch's lunatic said a "noise" like a turnip. Only in music can the pure turnipness of the turnip be conveyed without reference to its mortal accidents. In our present state of sensibility it is not yet possible in painting; but—and this more than justifies the aspiration—all art, of whatever kind, is art only in proportion as the grin survives the cat, as the turnipness of the turnip transcends its accidental and incidental features.

Therefore, with all its faults and follies of application, post-Impressionism—using the term inclusively—was right on general principles; and with all its too sanguine anticipation of human faculty it did show the direction in which painting must progress. The word "progress" is used here advisedly. It may be questioned if painting quâ painting can improve upon its past. There can be no doubt that it can become a more complete and authentic expression of life. Otherwise not only the principles of æsthetics but the promises of religion are meaningless. The condition of our becoming liker God, which is the central precept of all religions, is that our powers and capacities shall become liker themselves, which means a closer identity between life and its expression. This is a commonplace of every department of life. Better government is more representative government, liker man; and the ultimate aim of all improvements in machinery for the purpose is the abolition of machinery; the gradual reform of every institution that hinders the expression of human nature. Translated into terms of art this means the closer identity of form with substance; the gradual disappearance of every theory of likeness that hinders expression of the stuff.

But, and this is where the difficulties arise in art, it does not mean the disappearance of conventions. Rather the reverse. Progress in art means the discovery of more and more potent conventions, of a more powerful magic or "medicine" distilled from the nature of the stuff. That is why it is not necessary to discriminate between the various "isms" covered by post-Impressionism. They were, and are, all attempts at more potent formulas or conventions to express the conception of reality that followed the rejection of realism. Abandoning the cat you have to find a formula that will contain the grin. The chief defect of most of the "isms" was that the formulas were not found in the nature of the stuff. They were invented, and so the grin escaped, and there was no cat to fall back upon.

But movements in art do not happen before they are necessary, and the best defence of post-Impressionism is that it did not happen before. In an age of faith in reality it was not needed, and that is why some of the principles of post-Impressionism are found comfortably embodied in the Italian Primitives and in the paintings of the Chinese. Their conventions in art were universally accepted and understood. Moreover, they were traditional, and so a suitable technique was developed with them. That is the right answer to people who complain that the post-Impressionists paint so badly. In despair at unbelief they had to invent formulas and improvise a technique at the same time. Strictly speaking, you cannot do either; both must come out of serene faith in reality and patient familiarity with the material on its own merits, and not merely according to what it can be made to "do."

The words "formula" and "convention" are stumbling-blocks, I know. There is a notion that the individual artist can express reality in a sort of spasm of inspiration, like a confession at a revival meeting. This is the fallacy of "wood-

notes wild." As a matter of cold fact, I believe I am right in saying that wood-notes are anything but wild, but that on the contrary they are much more conventional and according to a formula than anything in human art. At any rate I have not observed any confusion between the blackbird and the thrush, nor any wide variation between one individual blackbird and another. But the important thing to remember is that, so far as we can judge, the formula or convention of the respective song is determined by the whole character of the instrument that produces it, not merely in quality and pitch of tone, but in range and sequence of notes. As a rough-and-ready indication of what an artistic convention should be, "wood-notes wild" might well be recommended. Nobody can deny that the blackbird sings "naturally," or complain that his convention is "arbitrary"; and it is precisely and only the convention that allows his art to be "unpremeditated."

As for that vexed question of "personality," it seems to me that a convention is the only form in which personality can be expressed. Otherwise you get mere incoherency. The most divinely-inspired person can only express himself to any purpose in articulate language, which is a convention of definite symbols in a definite order; and the tendency of prophets has always been to express themselves in parables, which are the strictest conventions. The essential thing is that the convention shall be based upon the real character of the medium or material in which the message is delivered. It need bear only a formal relationship to the subject of the message. The weakness of what we call conventional behaviour is that it pays far too much attention to appearances, and far too little to human nature, which is the medium in this case; and exactly the same applies to conventional art in the bad sense of stale or commonplace art. Fashions in dress are true conventions, and no woman with a scrap of personality ever found any difficulty in adapting a fashion to her individual type. On the other hand the occasional attempts one sees to dress in direct expression of personality without regard to fashion are not encouraging.

Progress in art, then, is progress from one convention to another, and so long as the convention is a more complete and sympathetic expression of the material, the progress is real. That is what strikes me as hopeful in modern painting. Our pictures are at least no further from nature, in the sense of reality, and they are much nearer to paint. Also, they are a much more direct expression of our lives in spirit, and they are much more closely related to the material context of our lives in its particulars of building and furnishing. Whether the art itself be better or worse, it is not so much "stuck on" as it was in the nineteenth century. Probably it is not so real, or close to life, or true to paint as it was from the twelfth to the fifteenth century; but the problems are much more difficult. In the interval we lost our faith in reality, and are only now beginning to find it again. We forgot work in business, and the nature of things in frantic exploitation of the things of nature; and we are only now beginning to recognise that society rests upon work and not upon business, and that the character of work is determined by the nature of the stuff; whether it be human nature or the properties of wood and stone and iron and wool. We cannot go back to the age of simple faith and the effortless unity of life that proceeded from it, but we can bring back our more accomplished art into closer relations with our infinitely more complex conditions; and apparently we are doing so with better success than at any time since the Middle Ages. What was done then in the spirit of the day's work we are doing now in the spirit of chastened understanding. We may not yet believe, but we have learnt the lessons of unbelief, and we have exploded most of the intellectual fallacies that kept religion and science and art in separate compartments. We are finding our synthesis.

As for the future, I believe, personally, that our conventions in art will become even more definite and formal. The subject-matter of painting will remain pretty much as always: life; but since as a result of our newer knowledge we are dealing more with the spirit than the accidents of life, our forms of expression will be more and more determined by the forms of substance; which are the only forms that we can now regard as reasonably permanent. The question asked will be not, "Is it true to nature?" which nobody is competent to answer, but, "Is it true to stone or wood or iron or paint as we know it?" One of the paradoxes of materialism, by the way, was its contempt for materials. Only the spiritualist can really enjoy the stuff.

But I do not think that we shall have again anything like the more extravagant conventions of post-Impressionism. They will not be necessary. Even in the last five or six years the truths they over-emphasised have become commonplaces to people of ordinary sensibility. Since nobody that matters believes them to be reality, we need no longer be Puritanical about appearances, and we can indulge in the fullest representation with a light heart. But we shall treat appearances with a light hand, without the snuffling Pharisaism, the "te-rewth, my brethren," of the nineteenth century; our chief care being to preserve reality of substance. Like the weavers of the Bayeux Tapestry we shall have no hesitation in making the principal figure twice as big as the others, knowing that it is far truer to do so than to pretend a conspiracy of circumstances or of the elements, or to degrade the beauty of paint with convincing light and shade in order to bring him into pictorial relief. We shall have no truck with accidents to justify effective "composition," but will frankly design. If, as I hope not, anybody paints "the Angels of Mons," he will paint them as angels, and not hedge by leaving it open to suppose that they were partly an effect of light upon a cloud. There will be no more optical illusions. Even that blessed word "selection," which was really studio-shop for "very like a whale," will be discredited. Instead of selecting our artistic meaning from among phenomena, like a cat among eggshells, we shall boldly impose it upon them; but never, never upon the stuff. For appearances and phenomena are only a bag of samples at any man's disposal; but the stuff is sacred.

What it amounts to from a practical point of view is that painting is becoming more highly specialised, less vaguely and generally "art," with all sorts of moral, æsthetic and sentimental axes to grind, and more definitely painting; and if you think it over this is a natural consequence, or at least accompaniment, of the dissolution of artificial barriers between one department of life and art and another. Community of interest and specialisation of function go hand in hand, and nothing keeps the cobbler from his last like artificial segregation for ulterior purposes. The denial of this truth, by the way, is one of the stock arguments against Socialism: that it would reduce everybody to a dead level. Exactly the contrary is true, and it is only when common necessities are more or less automatically fulfilled that uncommon abilities get a chance of development. So long as individuals, or industries, have to keep one eye on the others to see what they are up to, anything like true specialisation is impossible. The essence of competition is that everybody shall be like everybody else—only a little more so. This is amusingly illustrated in the publishing world, where every new picture paper or magazine has to be exactly like all the others. The arts were never more highly specialised than in the Middle Ages, when a healthy community of interests was established in the industrial world by means of the Trade Guilds. We are far enough, unfortunately, from healthy conditions in the industrial world, but at least we are coming to recognise that a community of interests is the first consideration.

Whether the renewed specialisation of painting be looked upon as an effect or a cause, it is undoubtedly connected with the more enlightened conception of human society. It is recognised that all distinctions must be based upon the nature of the stuff, and not upon interested exploitations of it, however lofty the purpose may seem. With the disappearance of the old arbitrary distinctions between decorative, pictorial and applied art, between the designer and the craftsman, and of the anxious preoccupation of the artist with truth to nature according to somebody's opinion, all as much commercial as æsthetic, painting is able to devote itself more single-heartedly to its proper business of handling paint. And, to rise from the practical to the spiritual, if there is any difference, nothing could be more promising for the future of art in its higher aspect. All art is praise, and the meaning of *Omnia Opera* is that every creature must be allowed to sing in its own convention. Universal harmony can only result from universal freedom of expression; and with perfect expression the end of art is fulfilled.

Albert Besnard

Portrait of Miss B—

BY one of the most famous French painters of women who makes a special study of opposed lights, warm and cold. With this mastery of conditions he combines great power of decorative design—as may be seen in the illustration. Besnard is fond of working in mixed mediums. This picture looks as if it were done in water-colour and pastel.

Plate XLI.

E. A. Cox

THE gift for emphatic design that has often delighted us in Posters is here displayed in painting. Obviously the motive of the picture was the queer shapes made by the windmill against the sky.

Luis Masriera

"The Wild Swans"

AN interesting translation of Northern legend into Southern atmosphere—as if a Folk Song were done into Latin verse. Colour and emotion are both deepened, and the meaning of the picture is summed up in the gesture of farewell.

Plate XLIII.

Mary Cassatt

"Child's Head"

THIS little study by a famous American artist, working in Paris, is as interesting for the treatment of the medium—pastel—as for the charm of the subject. It might be called a pansy—a *pensée*—in pastel.

Plate XLIV.

Reginald E. Higgins

"Almās sees the Princess."

A THOROUGHLY entertaining work, in conception and detail. The atmosphere of an Eastern tale is admirably suggested, and we are made to share in the astonished delight of Almās at the sight of the Princess.

Mrs. Arnesby Brown

"Delphiniums"

THE dreams as well as the looks of childhood are expressed in this extremely sympathetic study. There is a hint of pathos, too, as if the period of childhood were coming to an end. And, on the technical side, great value is given to the flowers by the tone of the cap.

Plate XLVI.

Ernest Procter

"The Virgin of the Harbour"

A CHARACTERISTIC modern attempt to re-capture the simplicity of the Italian Primitives. Realistic illusion is not aimed at, the emotional meaning being expressed in design, drawing, and colour.

Plate XLVII.

Blamire Young

"The Shepherd hears the Guns at Dawn"

THE peculiar solemnity of dawn is conveyed in the attitude of the shepherd. He gives the right impression of standing "on the top of the earth," and the quality of the light welling up from below is well suggested.

Plate XLVIII.

MODERN ART

By "TIS"

Chapter I.

AT the crown of the latest school of thought is a French Jew philosopher, Bergson; at its root was a German Pole, the most widely misunderstood thinker—it is not clear that he understood himself—who ever stalked through the jungle of human thought, Nietzsche. It was the latter who gave the signal for the great overthrow of our standards of civilization; by his transvaluation of all values, he overturned the scales; it was the former who took away the weights. Science has become metaphysicalosophic, Philosophy has become religious, and Religion, which was once both, is now neither—Chaos!

But in order to get at the cause of her troubles nature is conducting a most interesting analytical experiment, consisting in a plentiful application of nitric acid, physically in the form of high explosives, metaphysically in an universal desire for separation. Accordingly, we human beings are for the moment constrained to see universal salvation in universal disintegration—so-called national independence—society is being dissolved into its constituents. Out of this international chaos the thoughtlessly sanguine, overlooking the existence of class-disintegration, are inclined to predict the coming of national microcosms, in which order shall reign under shelter of stout circumvallations—cubic contentment, the ideal of the narrow mind obsessed by agoraphobia, by fear of the world-markets, and quite feasible too, if only the world were shaped like a sugar-box, four-square, more or less; but that it is not, and one cannot square a circle. The earth will continue to be round, and to move round, and the only possible cosmos that will emerge from this chaos will be rather more than less round, rather more than less international.

It is important to realise all this in considering the question of art. Art is merely a reflection of life, a solidification of thought: its real divisions are latitudinal, horizontal, as are the real divisions of humanity. Art is international—never more palpably so than to-day; the lines that divide it run along international lines. The gulf that separates Sir Edward Poynter from Augustus John, or Bouguereau from Maurice Denis, is far wider than the distance from Vroubel, the Russian, to Guevara, the Chilian. The vertical mind, with its eyes fixed upon its own zenith, is naturally bewildered by a movement of life which assails it horizontally, and so, without warning. To such a mind an England able to acknowledge, to take another example, a Dicksee and a Phelan Gibb as members of the same profession, disciples of the same muse, must appear as chaos, particularly if it views art through the microscope of a particular æsthetic theory. Fortunately, art is not only a question of æsthetics, its bases lie far deeper. However, all these artists are theoreticians, and one will find that the great world of artists, poets, and musicians is divisible in theorists and "a-theorists"—*i.e.*, people who have a conscious theory and people who have none. *Poeta nascitur non fit;* the a-theorist *nascitur*, the theorist *fit* and represents the great majority. Style in art always depends on the survival of the "fit-est," which pun is as unpardonable as it is true. The *born*

artist bursts through theory, and thus becomes the unconscious representative of a new one.

As we look into the past we see that the vast majority belonged to that class of artist which contentedly worked upon a theory cut and dried. But there is a great difference between the past and us; the past, as soon as it worked on theories at all, was content, and, indeed, had to be so, with one or possibly two theories at a time. It worked away at and with such for centuries at first, then at least for a generation or so. To-day art-theories sprout like mushrooms, and the artist who would be modern at all costs must change his theories more often, perhaps, than he can afford to change his shirt. There is, however, another peculiarity about theories: like wars, they can be started at will, but they cannot so be stopped. Thus one may find an idea invented, maybe, in Egypt or Crete a score of centuries ago, still flourishing by the side or in conjunction with one born but yesterday. We no longer give our artists time to work their ideas out, any more than we allow our politicians to bring their political thought to a logical conclusion, or our scientists to continue courageously in the straight, humble paths they had begun to tread. We are in the habit of demanding from every one the qualities which he lacks, because we too quickly tire of the qualities he possesses. For example: if we were a little less impatient we should be pleased, here in England, to accept the still existing followers of Lord Leighton, if they were only as "perfect" as he; and, on the other hand, we should complain that John was not sufficiently "Johnish." In other words, that the followers of one theory do not take sufficient pains to *follow* it out, and that the starter of another was apparently unwilling to *think* it out.

So modern art presents a bewildering spectacle of theories: some in their babbling infancy, some sicklied o'er with the pale cast of logic, others in their dotage, and but few in the proud self-sufficiency of health and strength. But when we leave theories and come to the "Atheorists," who correspond to the Agnostics in that they are more concerned with what they are doing than why they are doing it, we enter a different atmosphere. It is a positive delight for the unattached mind to wander through exhibitions, to venture upon an unexpected poster, to happen upon an illustration in a magazine, and so to receive the sudden knowledge that here, there, and anywhere may be a mind so filled with the beauty, the joy, the misery, the irony of life, and sufficiently skilled withal that it can put down its experience for others to see what it has seen, to feel what it has felt. Half the joy and satisfaction of such discoveries is their suddenness. A collection of masterpieces palls as much as a chamber of horrors; masterpieces, like criminals, do not naturally occur all together at the same time and place. Now art is, contrary to a widespread impression, by no means a homogeneous matter; not by any means merely "the sublime and beautiful"; or, if it is, we must extend the meaning of each to such capacity as to make definition meaningless. "The only criterion of a work of art is the unity of its means and aims. Where the aim is obscured or diverted by incompetence of craftsmanship, or where apparent craftsmanship hides the poverty of ideas or ideals, there is *bad* art."

Although very pleased with this definition of "good" and "bad" art, because the writer believes it to be his own, he must admit that it leaves things very much where they were before simply begging the question of "craftsmanship." Watts many years ago is reported to have said about Sargent: "I think he is all wrong; I don't know, but I *think* he is. We will leave it at that. . . ." In the same way Leighton judged Brangwyn, and Gérôme, Millet. We shall see later whether there is any answer to this question of competency; meantime, we ought to discover first of all what the aims of pictorial art are. If modern pictorial art does not represent a unity, what does its diversity consist of? In order to

find an answer to this question, let us begin at the bottom, with the so-called inartistic.

By some curious kink or twist which a mind contracts after a long experience of pictures, it becomes more and more impatient of prettiness, which is the first thing that attracts the inexperienced. For all that the Christian world, or, rather, the world since Christianity, had to wait some seventeen hundred years for the discovery of the pretty. It made some erratic, spasmodic attempts; one may come across a "pretty" face in an eleventh-century statue; one may persuade oneself that here and there a sixteenth-century artist, such as Correggio, achieved the pretty. But prettiness is by a natural trick of the mind associated with "petitesse." Burke demanded of beauty the qualities we associate to-day with mere prettiness. He thought that beauty must be "small, smooth, delicate and mild in colour." Watteau was the only genius of prettiness; even his men are pretty without offence. Then with Boucher prettiness was introduced into the nude, which Watteau had avoided. David, with whom the nineteenth century opens, and who in his portraiture could be relentlessly ugly, sought even to endow his heroes and heroines with "statuesque" prettiness—a truly impossible task. The idea of smoothness as a quality of beauty is intimately connected with the smooth, enamel-like quality of the canvases of David's period, and has remained as a true characteristic of all paintings which aim at classicity and prettiness. With the ideal of classicity closely allied is another form of "beauty," namely, the undraped or partly-draped figure, and it is to be observed that, in countries where people do not habitually go about without drapery, art and immorality were regarded as blood-relations; and it is to be further observed that the great European remedy against the danger of immorality is the veil. We have come to be satisfied with the application of some form of covering. Hence, whilst Giorgione's Venus may be condemned as grossly immoral, the tights of the "Principal Boy" are regarded as unexceptionable. Such being the case, the artist can spice his confection of beauty with a flavour of "naughtiness," to the satisfaction of a great section of the public and to the *mortification* of all the Old Masters, who did not know what naughtiness was any more than they could understand the pretty. They could be rude, gross, and highly immoral, but "naughtiness" was born under the periwig of the "Régence," and the French are still the best "exponents" of this cult. French naughtiness is never offensive, all other generally is. One cannot imagine a Frenchwoman being vulgar, any more than one can believe that a Watteau shepherdess could bring a breach of promise action. Be that as it may: art taken at its face—and figure—value, as understanded of the people, is either prettily, smoothly, elegantly beautiful and overtly "good," or covertly naughty. The public are not *naturally* attracted to any other kind of art unless there is some other external reason behind it.

This external and perhaps most powerful reason of attraction is "the story." If a picture is neither pretty nor naughty, and if it does not tell a story, it has, in the opinion of the majority, no *raison d'etre* at all. At this point the "artistic" and the "inartistic" join issue; the story is precisely what the artistic will not have in art. They say that it is irrelevant. Before the middle of the seventeenth century, it would have been absurd to speak of a picture without a story; there was no such thing. A picture without a story would have seemed as useless to them as a story without a plot. What the Old Masters did was to apply their art to the telling of a story. This was not only their whim and fancy, but the whole foundation of their craft. Before the invention and popularisation of the printing-

press our ancestors were in the habit of *reading* pictures instead of books, and to this day a careful listener at the Royal Academy may satisfy himself that eight out of ten visitors go there in order to *read* the pictures; and the eight readers are quite as justified as the two spectators. For centuries the story-picture was the only window through which the common people might obtain a view of the world beyond their noses; for untold generations the vast majority had no other use for their eyes than to tell them what was good and desirable or bad and useless for their bodily needs. Had they not seen pictures, they would not have known anything of the world beyond. Has the position of the majority undergone a really fundamental change? What is the real difference? When a man is trained to see beyond his nose, owing to the leisure he obtains at the expense of the unfortunate nose-grinders, he makes a *profession* of it. And so the artist's world is explained to the vulgar by professional lookers-at-pictures, who expound the meaning of art after the fashion of the Priesthood—as if art were a sealed book.

The public stand in nearly the same need of the picture as did their forbears in the days of Giotto—hence the success of the cinematograph. Whether the artist ought to tell a picture-story or not depends entirely on the nature of the story he wishes to tell, and the manner in which he "recites" it. If he cannot do better than the film, then obviously he need not waste his time. But now our professional lookers-at-pictures seek to prove that Giotto was *not* a story-teller, but an *artist;* that his "language" was directed by æsthetics, and that he was inferior to his Byzantine predecessors because he was already beginning to put imitation before the "essential"; the absolute. Indeed, they want us to believe that the Primitives were *really* greater artists than the Impressionists. That, I am sure, is a tremendous fallacy.

Chapter II.

THE "*Decorativeness*" of the Primitive is ultimately owing to what we would call to-day a *vulgar* desire to impress "the Barbarians" by plentiful use of precious gold and expensive pigments; to naïve if complex symbolism and conservative tradition —mellowed now and hallowed by the Ages.

The *Primitiveness* of the Primitive is due to the fact that they *saw* not much more than their own public. Giotto's *natural* inclination would make him see in sheep what his fellows saw, namely, mutton; his Christianity would teach him to see in addition what his Byzantine forerunners saw in them, namely, a symbol of Christianity, and the recent and novel teaching of St. Francis would further induce him to regard these humble animals as "little brothers." St. Francis, in fact, presented the world with a new pair of spectacles, and the changes we observe in the manner of visualisation are due not to an alteration of the eye, but to a change of spectacles presented to the artist and the rest of the world by a new thinker. It is well to remember that seeing, in the artistic sense, is mainly a question of such aids to vision. Without metaphysical spectacles the eye sees only what is in front of its nose, only what is likely to serve the immediate needs, fears or pleasures of its owner; it is for mental distances and higher aims that the aforesaid spectacles become indispensable. In so far as artistic expression is concerned, there can be but little doubt that even the mosaicists of Ravenna would have preferred Sargent's objective accuracy of vision to their own enthusiastically imitative inexactitude. At all events, Giotto was praised by Boccaccio because of his marvellous *imitative* powers, and Cennini, in the early fifteenth century, gives minute instructions how to imitate the texture of woollen material in mural *decoration*, thus clearly proving that the Primitives were as anxious to give an impression of nature as any "Impressionist."

There was, however, an enormous difference in the function of art. The artist in the early

days had an acknowledged and obviously important task; to him painting was the observance of a religious duty, intimately connected with the exercise of his craft. His business was the telling of sacred stories. In a world which took religion seriously, the painter of such subjects naturally occupied the highest place in his own particular hierarchy, but when religion began to be looked upon as an instrument for the better ruling of the masses and "the New Learning" had usurped its earlier place, even then story-telling still remained the artist's main duty, the only difference being that "æsthetics" were now *applied to* that purpose. How the art of story-telling by pictorial means had declined by the beginning of the nineteenth century is well shown, for example, by the fact that Baron Cros could quite seriously invite the public to be interested in such a subject as his:

"Eleazar prefers Death to the crime of Violating the Law by the eating of forbidden food."

He makes this old *Jewish* legend the plot of a *classic* drama for the delectation of a modern semi-demi *Christian* public. But it is to be observed that the most violent opponent of classicism, Delacroix, only arrived at a different conception of art by his passion for story-telling. Delacroix wanted to make the *plot* more dramatic, more relevant. In "The Barricades" he even became political. As a matter of fact, since Hogarth painting has gained a new and important function, partly fulfilling the duties of religious art. With Hogarth it became critical of life, and in this its critical faculty maintains a far more vital connection with life than in any other; it still remains the power of influencing conduct. Such pictures as Ford Madox Brown's "Work," or Millet's "Man with the Hoe," are instances of vital criticisms of life expressed in terms of art. The artist who produces work of such kind needs to be more than sensible of "beauty," and hence is frequently unrecognised as an artist by his "Brother-Brushes," who prefer to spend their time in invention or solution of purely æsthetic problems.

The tendency of artists is like the tendency of the majority in that respect; the majority of people prefer to follow the line of least resistance, to swim with the stream.

Hence it happens that most artists only skim the surface of their element, seeking to attract by superficial qualities; in other words, to paint like some other living or dead master.

This brings us to the next aim in art. In the first instance, it was surface prettiness; in the second, the telling of a story which might be religious, like Fra Angelico's, or mythological like Poussin's, or critical like Hogarth's, or literary like Delacroix's. This latter painter happened to see one of Constable's pictures. Constable is, however, remarkable for the fact that with him art had no "story"; he was anxious to reproduce phenomena of nature on canvas. He wished to improve upon the methods of those old Dutch painters, who also only *saw* and painted without ulterior motives, the laws of harmony and composition, which they incidentally observed being comparable rather to the architect's science than the philosopher's speculation. In the course of his studies, Constable hit upon a new manner of technique. He painted with extraordinarily fat and riotous "brushing" and impasto. That suited Delacroix's temperament; he copied Constable's surface quality, and thus introduced into art a new and highly-technical interest. Whilst the public continued to look into pictures and tried to enjoy the plot, the artist was thinking of technique. Then came Turner, with his "Snowstorm," and the public saw only "soap-suds and whitewash," and so became gradually used to pictures that were expressed in such a manner as to be unintelligible to them. Art required interpretation, and it has more or less required it ever since. It so happened, however, that that branch of art which ought not to have required any interpretation of any kind,

needed it most. The Impressionists, whose pictures were for the most part entirely innocent of plot, but consisted in scrupulous "imitation" of nature, seemed least intelligible, because the Impressionists had eliminated "line," which is to the naïve intellect what colour is to the emotion, and what a crutch is to the lame. And it is precisely because through Constable line became, so to speak, superfluous, that colour assumed so great an importance in our day, to which it has become indispensable in the form of "pattern"—*i.e.*, an arrangement of colour-planes.

The aim to produce, or rather to re-produce, emotion by means of "pattern" represents, like all the other aims, a long evolutionary progress towards complete freedom of expression. Pattern releases the artist from the obligation to be interesting in his plot and "imitative" in his representation.

The artist can to-day, *for the first time in history*, say what he likes, and express it in any manner he chooses. What art is suffering from is the same as that which life is suffering from: it is just beginning to dawn upon the world that the limits set by *nature* to man are as nothing in comparison with the limits set by *man* to man. At present there is chaos both in life and in art, "Chromocivilization and greedy Barbarism," because we are in a complete muddle as regards the finding of rational means towards a desired end.

Disgusted with the old formulæ of art, our more revolutionary artists are trying to invent new formulæ of their own, formulæ so different from unspectacled nature and spectacled art that they need commentaries, manifestoes, and all manner of explanatory notes. The aim is nevertheless clear; they wish to increase the *expressiveness* of art; the will is there, and the power, most likely, too; what seems to be wanting is, to borrow a word from present-day politics, a new orientation. Our artists do not yet realise what is and what is not to the purpose. Whilst they are feverishly experimenting with new building material, so to speak, they have completely forgotten the plans of their structures.

They might, with advantage, take a hint from literature. The writer conceives an idea, but as soon as he wishes to express this idea he must select one of the recognised forms of expression. He cannot, for example, clothe Miltonian grandeur in Gilbertian motley; nor is Mr. Dooley's diction the best for a scientific treatise; nor Henry James' for *John Bull;* neither would it be reasonable to demand that every piece of literature should combine the qualities of Dante *cum* Shakespeare *cum* Goethe, because they are recognised as the greatest writers. Yet it was once demanded of pictorial art that it should combine the qualities of Raphael-Titian and Michelangelo, because they were the greatest artists. And to-day the different "*movements*" in art are generally experiments in new combinations. Meantime, we are in danger of losing the plans!

The painter or pictorial artist has three main "plans" to consider: Does he wish to paint *prose, poetry,* or *decoration?* If it is to be prose, what kind of prose is it to be—an imitation of nature, an illustration of a piece of literature; a description of an incident, a "critique" of life? In all such cases the interest of his art is without, not within. If it is imitation of nature, such as a portrait, faithfulness and accuracy are the principal duties; so also faithfulness should be the principal duty of the illustrator, where illustration is meant to *amplify*, not to beautify, the text. Finally, if the artist wishes to exert a critical faculty, he is under no obligation to make it "sublime," but suffers no other limitation than the critic of life who uses his pen. He may, however, not wish to express himself in prose, being under the impression, as he most likely is, that art is essentially *poetry*. It includes far more than that, but at all events, if he regards it as poetry, he should treat it as such.

The mere fact of painting an orchard in springtime will not make the picture a *poetic* expression of "Spring," any more than calling the portrait of a young girl "Sweet Seventeen" will turn the picture into the equivalent of a lyrical poem; or painting all the actors in a Coronation ceremony, from the king to the last page, will turn such a picture into an equivalent of a Coronation Ode. Pictorial expression is subject to the same law as literary expression; prose defines, poetry suggests.

Whatever their immediate purpose, the whole history of pictorial art shows that, consciously or subconsciously, artists have been trying to perfect themselves in two directions, viz., in the *manner* and in the *form* of pictorial expression. They have sought on the one hand to perfect their manner of visual expression until it should amount to optical illusion, and almost, but not quite, *pari passu* they have, on the other hand, endeavoured to use this power of optical illusion in such a way that it should express *more* than nature, namely, poetry, or the visualisation of emotion—a new thing, an addition to nature, as it were. But the history of pictorial art also proves conclusively that they have not been clear as to the difference between manner and form of expression. Form of expression until the nineteenth century was more or less epochal. We distinguish between Gothic, Renaissance, Rococo, etc., *forms*. *Manner*, on the other hand, was personal, and we therefore speak of the Giottesque, the Michelangelesque, or the manners of Hogarth or Burne-Jones. In the last century, however, the distinctions between the two aims became blurred. We speak of Academic, Classic, Romantic, Pre-Raphaelite, Impressionist, Post-Impressionist painting, but are not certain whether to call them manners or forms of expression, and find it difficult to classify certain artists' work, such as Degas's, for example, at all.

The art of the nineteenth century is characterised by its tremendous variety of aims. The transition from one form-manner to the other was sometimes quite abrupt. David was a Neo-Classicist, but in his portraiture or in such pictures as "Marat assassinated," as naturalistic as Caravaggio and as passionate as Delacroix. Delacroix copied *stante pede* Constable's manner in order to apply it to his form of expression. Millais's transition from the Pre-Raphaelite form-manner to the naturalistic manner was sudden. Such a volte-face was impossible to former ages. There is no difference in the form or the manner in which Van Eyck paints "God-Father" or "Jodocus Vijdt." Dürer vainly tried to work in the Italian manner. Rembrandt uses the same formula for his portraits, for his religious and for his classical subjects, and never changed his manner throughout his life—only broadening it a little either intentionally or, what is more likely, through physical infirmity. Velasquez matured in *manner* so markedly that one might be inclined to believe that he changed his "style." Nevertheless, his form of expression did not change; his form of expression throughout his life was the same for all subjects. He treated a portrait as he treated the "Surrender of Breda" and the "Forge of Vulcan." Reynolds's form-manner does not differ materially whether he paints a portrait or designs a stained-glass window. Yet it was in the eighteenth century that the first doubts began to arise. Diderot complains that Boucher's Madonnas are not sufficiently religious in treatment. When we come to Turner we find that his manner changes with the different forms he gives to his art; the evolution of his technique is not so much conditioned by a gradual improvement in visualisation, such as Velasquez's, but by a successive change of direction or aim.

But the first real inkling we get of the true relation between form and manner is through two Frenchmen—Puvis de Chavannes and Millet.

C. Maresco Pearce

"Three Pines"

A STUDY in tree character, confessing the good influence of Japan. Observe the consistency throughout, of workmanship with decorative design.

Roberto Domingo

"The Bull Fight"

A PIECE of swift Impressionism, everything being sacrificed to the momentary aspect of things. It is the dramatic moment before the "kill," and one can feel that the spectators hang in silence upon the result.

Plate L.

G. L. Brockhurst

"Une Landaise"

THE work of a young painter who combines with remarkable success the virtues of Academic training with the more synthetic methods of modern art.

Plate LI.

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G. Spencer Pryse

"Hammer and Tongs"

MR. PRYSE made a reputation with his bold work in lithography before he exhibited as a painter. His work is remarkable for dramatic composition and large, fluent drawing, as well as for the keen appreciation of sport expressed in it.

Plate LII.

Jack Yeats

"At the Start"

A PICTURE of singular power, in character, design, colour, and handling. The grouping well deserves the description of monumental, and the firm way in which the whole thing is constructed in paint atones for minor defects of workmanship.

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Plate LIII.

Henri Martin

THIS is by the famous French painter who decorated the Toulouse Capitole. He is before everything a painter of Summer and Autumn glow, able to suggest the warmth as well as the illumination of reflected rays. Observe how the figures are not merely lit, but suffused through and through with sunlight. With this command of light and colour, Henri Martin combines great science in decorative design.

Plate LIV.

J. Kramer

LACK of material beauty in the model is here redeemed by depth of sentiment and dignity of arrangement. The suggestion is that of an isolated existence in which the primitive instincts and affections have room to develop, and the effect is infinitely touching.

Plate LV.

M. Wells

"Costers"

AN interesting attempt to combine actuality, romance, and decoration—with a touch of symbolism. The merit of the picture is in its modest thoroughness. Everything is carefully studied, but not laboured in execution.

Plate LVI.

Neither of these two painters was "imitative" of nature—which they *interpreted* rather than copied. Millet's manner was a sincere expression of the form of his art. It was as such entirely personal, and consequently vigorously condemned by the academically-trained minds, who demand that the artist's form and manner should be, if not traditional, at least realistic. Millet had *one manner*, but he also had only *one form:* he wrought a number of different pictures, figure as well as landscape subjects, but they were all elegies, all one type of expression. Puvis de Chavannes painted a number of different subjects, but they were practically all conceived and treated as decoration. In both cases the relationship between the subject and its manner is intimate; in fact, inseparable.

Whether that was mere accident, whether it was a mere chance, that prevented them from producing works to which their style was not fitted—though that seems unlikely at all events in Millet's case—or not, the fact remains that the forms they chose and the manner they adapted to those forms of expression were logically and inseparably one. On the principle "Le style c'est l'homme," it is generally, however, assumed that the artist cannot help himself in the matter of manner, which is looked upon as natural to him. According to this theory, for example, everything that Leighton painted would look Leightonesque, just as Zuloaga is always Zuloaga, and Cézanne, Cézanne. It would be difficult to dispute this in Cézanne's case, because Cézanne was so unskilled that he could not have had the faculty to change his manner, over which he had but limited control. In the case of Leighton or Zuloaga, there can be little doubt that they could change or have changed their mode of expression if they had seen any need for such a change. There are many Japanese painters of to-day who can paint either in the Eastern or the Western manner at will, and acquit themselves creditably in both. There is then a great difference between style and form-manner. Shakespeare had his own style, but the forms he adopted were in accordance with the period, and the manner he adopted was in accordance with the particular form selected as an expression of thought.

Chapter III.

IN order to understand what is happening in modern art, *i.e.*, the art of the twentieth century, it will serve a useful purpose to examine what has happened to a sincere artist such as William Strang. Strang has changed his manner repeatedly. One remembers works of his painted in a sort of Titianesque style reminiscent of Watts. One knows his Holbeinesque portraiture and his attempts at Hals's technique. He has experimented in a manner which vaguely suggests a French origin, but is, I believe, his own; he has also painted pictures embracing certain types with which one has become familiar through Augustus John; his etchings show the influence of Goya, Legros, Dürer, and Rembrandt. First thoughts incline one to regard this fickleness as a sign of weakness, as a lack of artistic conviction; nevertheless the causes of this apparent fickleness are much deeper ones. Strang is typical of the whole tendency of modern art: he is searching for improved means of expression.

If we regard modern art as a reflection of modern life, we may be justified in comparing its method with the hypothetical procedure of "Creative Evolution." Modern art is feeling its way; it is looking for something, the nearness of which it apprehends but has not yet completely discovered. Its duty is clear: it is there to reflect or express life. Its problem is always the same: to find the best means of doing so. The modern difficulty is the complexity of life's problems and the consequent complexity of art. Religion in the ecclesiastic formula of old will

no longer do, because it no longer embraces the whole of human life from the cradle to beyond the grave. The classic Renaissance formula is too limited, too aloof, too aristocratic; the impressionistic, *i.e.*, the scientific formula is too detached, too prosaic, too unemotional. The art-force swings back in search of the emotional, and the world is surprised by extraordinary apparitions such as Picasso's and Kandinsky's "Art," an art which discards imitative representation altogether, seeking to substitute abstract forms and colour schemes, rather inciting the emotion directly through the eye in the manner of music, which incites emotion by direct appeal to the ear. Whether such a direct appeal is possible is another question, but what interests us here is the fact that Kandinsky demands for art absolute freedom in every respect. It is to be independent of *all* fetters imposed upon it by "representation"; it is to be dependent only on "inner necessity."

Now this is where Strang's art becomes instructive. It is quite manifest, for instance, that if Strang paints a portrait in the manner of Holbein, and another one deliberately in the manner of Rembrandt—whether he succeeds or not is quite immaterial—he is looking for a mode of expression. The *Form* of his picture is rigidly prescribed—it is an imitation of nature; the *Manner* is not prescribed, since one can paint portraits in Holbein's, in Hals's, or in dozens of other manners. But in theory at least *one* manner must be the best; one manner must either already exist, or may still have to be evolved, which will give the most perfect "imitation" of a personality. There must be a "formula" for portraiture, and this I apprehend is what Strang and, with him, modern art is "after." There is an "inner necessity" not in the subject (the painter) but in the object (the thing painted). That inner necessity is the exclusion from portraiture of all that is not a representation of a personality, and the emphasis on all that is. I have taken the case of portraiture, and Strang's in particular, because it is comparatively simple and very instructive. Only the portrait painter himself can realise the difficulties of a craft about which there is no fundamental dispute: artist and public are agreed that the best portrait is that which gives the best likeness of a *personality*, which is a little more than the likeness of a *person*. Now the vast majority of painters are far too busy with the technicalities of their craft to devote their energy to the painting of personality; they break down when they have achieved a tolerable imitation of the person. But even when they do possess the necessary energy it is a question whether they possess the insight. Watts had it, and failed as a craftsman, where Sargent, the craftsman *par excellence*, scarcely possesses it, and yet occasionally succeeds. That difficulty is inevitable, but the portrait painter's craft is burdened with a lot of extraneous matter, because the *inner necessity* of portraiture has been obscured, so that the painter begins with an enormous handicap—he goes to work with a divided mind. He does not know where to place the emphasis, whether on reality or on imagination, whether on the realistic or the æsthetic aims of, not his own particular branch, but of art in general. He does not know whether he should falsify line like Raphael,* or harmonise "colour" like Titian, or render atmosphere like Velasquez, or dispense with it like Holbein; whether he should paint with diffused light like the great Spaniard, or with one concentrated light like the great Dutchman, or with two concentrated lights like Orpen, or with a bunch of different lights like Besnard. He is uncertain whether he should introduce Rigaud's column and curtain props, or Gainsborough's landscape dodge, or Van Eyck's plain background, or Holbein's interesting personal still-life *milieu*. Finally, he is inclined to add some irrelevant note of red or blue or green for the sake of picturesqueness, or

* Though falsification is absent consistently from all Raphael's portraiture.

a Japanese curtain and a Spanish shawl for the sake of pattern. In short, he scarcely knows whether he is painting an optic experiment, a poem, or a decorative pattern. All these things are wholly irrelevant to portraiture, and the portraitist's first necessity is to rid himself of all superfluities. The only real problem is to find the right portrait formula, quite irrespective of æsthetic considerations. Portraiture has an inner necessity of its own which seems to admit of only very limited interpretations. There are three formulæ already in existence which it would be difficult to improve upon: Holbein's, Velasquez' and Carrière's. These three men were portrait painters *sans phrase;* so much so that they were painters of portraiture *even where they should not have been.* This point takes us to the heart of the problem.

Hitherto artists have been seeking for a formula that should cover *all* the different branches of art. They, *e.g.*, have not only painted portraits in a classical manner—they have adapted the classical manner to the painting of unclassical subjects, or classical subjects to the unclassical manner (compare Poussin's "Biblical scenes," Rembrandt's "Ganymede," and, in our own days, Slevoght's "Penelope"). The formulæ they have hunted for have not been dictated by the *inner necessity* of the subject. That has happened because they have not been clear in their own minds about the different purposes which art may serve.

Sickened with the imitative perfection of the film, they are seeking to-day for other *forms* of expression instead of going over the ground of art's achievement and seeking to bring order into the chaos of already existing forms by deciding which in each case *conforms* best with the different substances of art.

The need of to-day is not the invention of new means of expression any more than it is our need to invent new *means* of existence; our life and art problems are how to make use of the means we already possess in the most efficient manner. They made chairs very much like our own ten thousand years ago in Egypt; their way of chair-making has not yet come to be regarded as "out of date," nor, on the other hand, have we come to the conclusion that the Egyptian knew more about chair-making than we. That has happened because the Egyptian found the *ne plus ultra* in that respect; he found, or at all events used, the formula which we have not been able to improve upon. But he did not find the perfect formulæ for picture-making. That, however, is not to say that such formulæ will never be found. Formulæ for verse-making have been discovered, and re-discovered, and used by many poets of many races and of different ages, and the probability is that eventually formulæ for all things, including art, will be discovered from which mankind will not be able to depart with profit.

Accordingly we may come to feel that all portraits should be painted in "the" portrait-manner, after the example of the Chinese funeral portraiture, and that it is waste of time and energy to experiment with new *formulæ* if these do not constitute improvements on the old. Were the artist from his student days trained in such formulæ which the experience of the ages has shown to be the most effective, he would not be expected to make lyrics out of a personality with whom he is not united by ties of lyrical emotion, nor decorations out of unpliable because personal characteristics. That something of this kind is felt by many modern painters is confirmed by the fact that artists who otherwise permit themselves perfect freedom and unconventionality of expression adopt a much less eccentric, a much more "sober," formula in their portrait-work; so much so that they seem to possess a dual personality. This dualism is due to the fact that in portraiture at least the artist can have no doubt that it is his duty to communicate with his public. He knows that a portrait is a means of communicating something, of conveying something; that, in fact, he is

rendering a *service*. Yet he is ever distracted by his desire to disguise this service to man so that it may appear as an offering to the muse.

The whole of modern art is permeated with this dualism, to the detriment of both public and artist. It is detrimental to the public because it has to take what it does not understand, and to the artist because he accustoms himself to the notion that he is a law unto himself, a self-ordained High Priest of the Art-Cult, responsible only to its "unknown God," and thus is always able to shirk responsibilities by claiming "benefit of the clergy."

If one tries to discover what the "High" artist, the man who, according to such a High Priest, is supposed to be creating *in vacuo*, is really occupied with, one finds that he is busy mainly with the vehicular qualities of art; he has no new message to convey, nor is he, as the earlier Christian artists were, the propagator of a new faith. On the contrary, he repeats, generally without sympathy, all the old, old stories, only in a new, or supposedly new, manner. He goes for what he calls "the essential" of representation: for example, "the tree-ness of tree" or the horsiness of a "rocking-horse." By such phrases he means to convey his conviction that a tree has its own significance, and that a rocking-horse, lacking, as it does, all the accidents of natural birth, is more essentially a representation of all natural-born horses combined, because it bears only the marks which make it recognisable as a horse. That is quite useful as far as it carries, but it does not carry us very far. The meaning of all art is absolutely dependent on associations of ideas. A thing painted or carved is beautiful or ugly, true or false, well done or ill done, only in reference to the association of ideas it evokes. The tree has in itself no significance, or, if it has, its own significance is inevitably hidden from our view; it must signify something to *us*, or it signifies nothing. Similarly, there may be occasions on which a rocking-horse will be quite sufficiently representative of a horse, but the test is not the manner of representation, but the occasion, or the purpose which the representation is intended to serve. Simplification—*i.e.*, freedom from the tyranny of minute realism which was once considered essential—is an admirable and commendable aim, so long as it does not itself amount to a new tyranny.

But there are at present other "vacuum" artists who, as has already been pointed out, seek to do away with representation of reality entirely; who seek in abstract forms and possibly colours the summits of art. "The idea of a circle—how beautiful it is," a very well-known and very "modern" poet once said to me. But the idea of a circle is the idea of a self-devouring rhythm, void of hope, change or expectation; an empty circus for the empty mind. Such ideas without association, if they exist at all, belong to mathematics, not to art; and theories based on speculation of abstract forms and colours belong to psycopathy. Ours is a relative world, and everything in it is a near relation to the poor Ego which considers itself absolute. It is not the thing that is created—by God or man, if man may be said to create at all—which counts, but the impression it makes upon us, the ideas it suggests.

One may, I think, safely leave the "vacuum" poets and artists to their splendid isolation, without detriment to a proper diagnosis of art, since the real significance—or, more fittingly and humbly expressed, its *relative* significance—relative to man and his society is the newly manifest searching after order. The Impressionists taught us to see synthetically, previous ages having taught our eyes to distinguish analytically. We have now obtained visual liberty, and the question which rages around liberty of every kind is: What is to be done with it? That really is the question; so that the problem of art resolves itself into a question of meanings rather than means.

Chapter IV.

IF there is any truth in what has been said before about the phrasing of portraiture, then a similar revision of phrasing will have to take place in the other branches of art. It was already suggested that art is not only poetry; it also embraces prose, and not only prose, but also decoration, that is, an embellishment of prosaic concrete realities—wood and plaster, stones and iron.

Considered as prose, it has its purpose outside art; considered as poetry, it has its purpose within; considered as decoration, it applies this inner purpose to use. The divisions are clear and unmistakable. They are only blurred to our eyes because over all modern art hangs the cobweb of æsthetics. Let us take an example.

In modern exhibitions there are always a great many subject-pictures of which it is impossible to say for what purpose they were painted; but we will choose an instance from a recent academy. It was a picture of Belgian refugees, and, so far as technical qualities are concerned, very ably painted. What is the possible purpose of such a painting? It was evidently not meant to be a mere statement of *fact;* the artist was not interested in the particular individuals represented, nor did he expect the public to regard the picture as a sort of snapshot in natural colours. Was it then conceived as a decoration? Possibly, because it was painted "with an eye to colour," such as would scarcely have occurred in reality. It was also deliberately composed; in other words, the artist had duly considered æsthetic laws. But decoration, properly understood, is always "applied" to something, and this picture had neither the size nor the breadth which we have come to expect from wall-decoration. It was quite manifestly conceived as an easel picture. There is, then, only one other possibility: the picture was intended to be poetic; it was a "Belgian Lament." The refugees were shown in the act of taking flight; their hearts would be full of anger, since their movement shows that they had not yet been overcome with despair.

Movement, haste, anger and stupefaction, fear and desolation, those are the emotional qualities which the picture should have expressed, even in "pattern," and no doubt would have expressed but for the fact that the artist was all the time thinking, not of refugees, but of æsthetics.

Against this it may possibly be urged by the artist that he saw his subject "like that,"* and that the refugees did not show any of these things in their faces or their actions to a greater degree than he has shown. Quite possibly; but it is the business of the *poet* to intensify his soul's experience by all the means he is capable of, and that which is called poetic licence is the licence to *eliminate* all things that are irrelevant to his purpose. Thereby alone does he justify his existence.

Now this is precisely the aim of many of the younger and more revolutionary artists. There is, for instance, such a picture as Kramer's "The Jew." It strikes one as barbaric and uncouth in its simplicity, so thoroughly has the artist made use of elimination. The tragedy of Jewry, its isolation, its oppression, its patience in suffering, seem to be conveyed by the simplest possible means. The question which posterity will be able to judge better than ourselves is, however, whether such a picture as this is too bald an abstraction; whether it is sufficiently *poetic;* whether it does not indeed approach too nearly to mathematics. One can never judge how "good" a thing is until one has seen something better, and we are only just beginning to see the possibilities of a free pictorial art fettered only by *inner* necessities. The enormous force of "inner necessity," conceived objectively and not subjectively, may be illustrated by an example from the art of writing. An author conceives the idea for a play; he creates his

* I have seen a snapshot of spectators at a "Tragedy of the Sea," the capsizing of a boat. None of these show the remotest outward sign of the emotion that stirred them.

dramatis personæ, and the plot makes it necessary that one of his "characters" should act in a certain way in a certain situation. When the author comes to work it out, he finds that the "character" *which he himself has created* would and could not do in life what he wants him to do for the sake of the plot. If he forces this *dramatis persona* to act as he would not act, for the sake of the plot, he offends against the inner necessity of the character. If he permits his creature to act in accordance with its character, he offends against the inner necessity of the plot. A compromise is impossible. The author must either change his character if the play depends on the plot, or allow his characters to work out the plot if the play depends on a study of characters. In its application to art this means that the artist as the author of his work must be quite clear in his own mind what he wishes to create; whether it is to be a study of fact, of fancy, or of applied fancy, *i.e.*, decoration. Having done so, he must bring the inner necessity of *form* into complete agreement with the inner necessity of *manner*.

As we are at present in a transition stage, our pictorial art abounds with works produced without such *inner* harmony, amounting in many cases to a complete obfuscation of purpose.

Since the nineteenth century has enabled us to "imitate" nature more faithfully and less laboriously than any other earlier age, there is now but little excuse for mere representation, unless such is desired for a special purpose. An artist may be required to paint an "interior" or a certain "view." That is pure prose. The artist cannot permit himself any poetic licence without deviating from the truth, and therefore discrediting his record; but he can either treat it *synthetically*, laying emphasis on the general impression, or he can treat it *analytically*, laying emphasis on the variety of different objects before his eyes, "according to order." But the majority of landscapes and interiors one comes across in exhibitions are manifestly a compromise between pure imitation and æsthetics; many pictures have nothing to recommend them but the skill with which the artist has rendered "atmosphere." This is the aftermath of Impressionism. Monet was justified in painting one and the same haystack some eighty times, because he was not so much an artist as the discoverer of a new method of visualisation, a mastery of the air. Looping the loop is also evidence of perfect mastery of that element. But a master of the air does not therefore devote all his time to looping the loop for the benefit of the public; he has other objects in view, and in any case the public tire of a feat, however skilful, once it is no longer unprecedented.

As has already been pointed out, there are three, and only three, different ways of using art, viz.: for purposes of prose, of poetry, and of decoration. Each of these has its own laws of "inner necessity," and it is the business of the modern artist to obey these laws rather than to follow schools of arbitrary æsthetics, such as Classicism, Primitivism, Cubism, or any other such purely *academic* conventions. The fault of the *academic* formula, whatever its particular complexion, is its rigidity, as we see clearly enough when we look at "old-fashioned" pictures. The academic mind sees everything in the same light. It decrees that prose, poetry and decoration should be painted in one and the same way. That is degrading art to the limits of a bugle, with which we can only create a certain number of sounds, and from which we can only get variety by transposition and "time." Art is a much finer, a much more sensitive instrument, comparable rather to the violin, with which much depends on the instrument, but more on the player. For all that, however, the violin has its laws, against which even the greatest master dare not offend. Yet much of modern art seems to owe its origin to the sort of confidence which inspired that Yankee who was asked whether he could play the violin, and who replied: "I don't know; I'll try."

Impressionism and the whole school of visualisation that dispenses with contours is a great pitfall to the tyro, who perceives how easily "artistic effects" may be obtained, and imagines that spontaneity matters more than assiduity. He is apt to look upon "finish" as mere pedantry, with the result that he perpetrates or condones sheer incompetence, and is inclined to see intention where there is physical defect or absence of skill. In this manner the defects of the "Primitives" are exalted into qualities, and men with a kink, like El Greco, Blake, Cézanne, imitated in their imperfections. In result this is ultimately exactly the same as the effect of admiring and copying the "perfection" of Raphael or Michelangelo, because such adulation disregards the "inner necessity." It is the "inner necessity" that drives the true poet, the true painter, the true composer, to utterance; it is the *categorical imperative* of his own particular nature. The outward form of expression can never be copied unless the "inner necessity" is the same, which it of course never is. But the practice of art has technical difficulties of which neither literature nor poetry knows anything. For this reason it were admirable if painters were forced into apprenticeships; if no one were allowed to ply the trade and profession of an artist until he had given proof that he had mastered, not this or that "perfection," but the rudiments of his craft; had shown that he could paint decent impersonal prose, and knew how to apply this prose-knowledge to the purposes of poetry and decoration. That is what William Morris meant when he desired "a new art of conscious intelligence." This would be a *new* art indeed, because the old masters were bound by their tradition. The Renaissance began to seek for freedom of expression, but it was not till the nineteenth century, with its bewildering mass of new "isms," that actual freedom became a possibility. Conscious intelligence tells the modern painter that there are many ways of painting, but that none will serve all purposes equally well.

How much consciousness of purpose has been lacking might be illustrated by almost endless examples, but one will suffice to show that unity of means and aim as the only criterion of art is barely recognised, even by the eminent.

Whistler, if any one, was a poet in pigments. His painting owes its origin not only to poetic feeling, as his own written account of his inspiration proves; he was, unlike Rossetti, whose painting is sheer literary poetry, also a colour-poet. In his poems the landscape happens; its topography is merely an excuse for the unveiling of his feeling. His sentiment was roused by the beauty of atmospheric effects. In his portraiture he once or twice went so far as to leave out the features, so that the public might see his "poem" rather than his portraiture. In both cases there is a striking disunity between aims and means. Whistler saw not only atmosphere, he saw also pattern. Pattern is a decorative quality, and a very two-dimensional one, whilst nothing could serve the purposes of the third dimension more faithfully than atmospheric colour. Its very essence is the suggestion of depth. Consequently we have in such pictures "A variation in violet and green," or even in "Carlyle" a record of disunion. Prose (portraiture) is here elevated into poetry, but the pattern, conceived by Whistler always as part of the surface, allies this poetry to "decoration." Of his landscapes Whistler said at the famous Ruskin trial: "I have perhaps meant rather to indicate an artistic interest alone in the work, divesting the picture from any outside sort of interest which might have been otherwise attached to it. It is an arrangement of line, form, and colour first, and I make use of any incident of it which shall bring about a symmetrical result." His portraits were also regarded by him as poetry. "Take the portrait of my mother exhibited at the Royal Academy as 'an arrangement in grey and black.' Now that is what it is. To me it is interesting as a picture of my mother; but what can or ought the public to care about the identity of

Frank Brangwyn, A.R.A.

"A Fair Wind"

APART from its merits as a picture of the sea, this print is remarkable for its recognition and employment of the special qualities of wood. It is a true "black-and-white," the effect being got out of the material—as indeed is the case with everything done by Mr. Brangwyn.

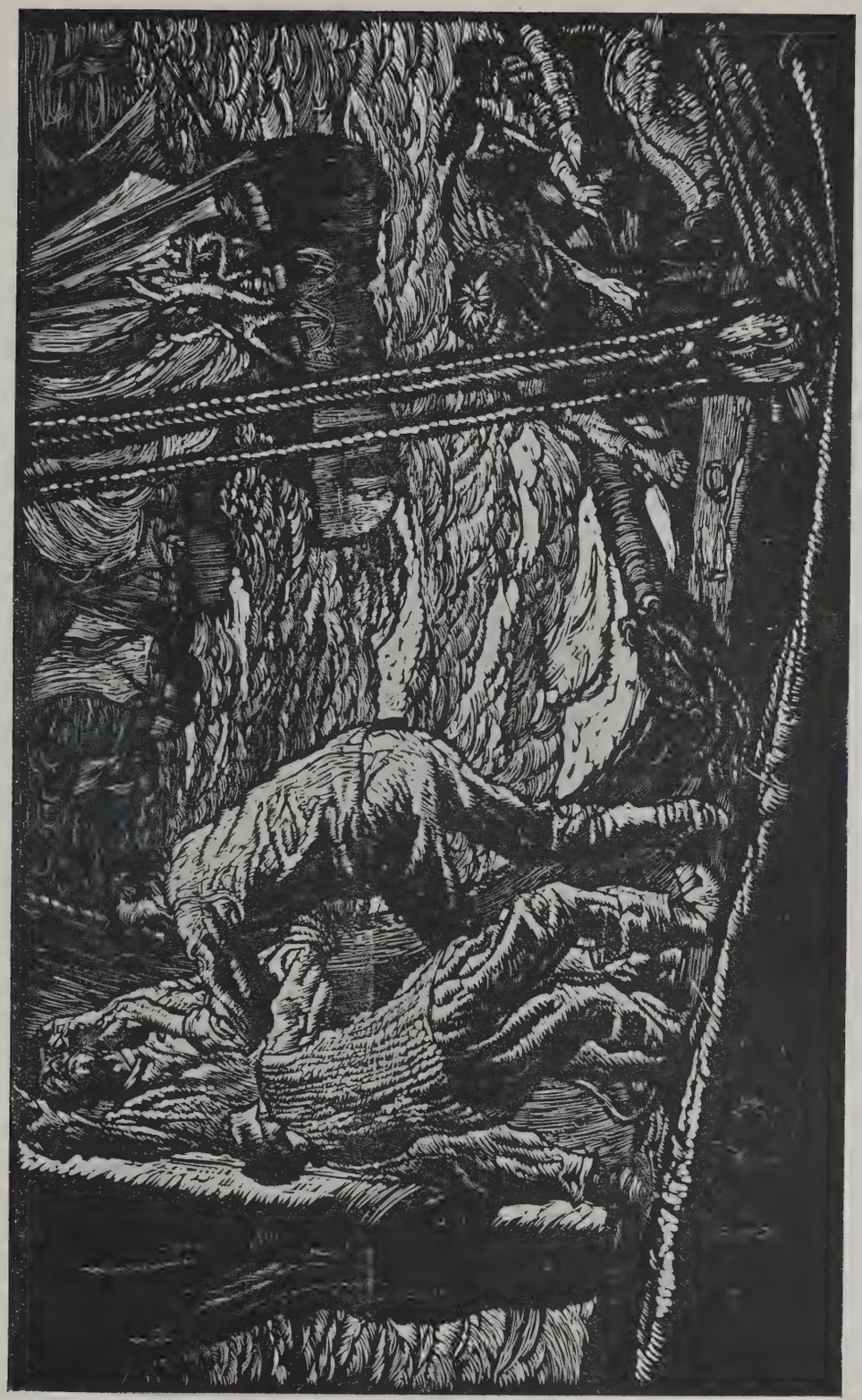

Plate LVII.

W. Lee Hankey

THE resources of dry-point are here displayed in the strong contrast of tone; a contrast that is yet without harshness, thanks to the velvety quality of the darks produced in this medium.

Plate LVIII.

Augustus John

"The Hawker's Van"

AN epitome of the life of the road in terms of etching by a man who sympathetically understands both the life and the medium. For not less remarkable than the technical qualities of economy and precision is the feeling of weather and the suggestion of being "at large."

Plate LIX.

G. Spencer Pryse

"An Episode"

A STUDY in romance, full of the inarticulate aspirations of youth. In its emotional effect it might be compared to a "Nocturne" by Chopin—and indeed the tones have a musical value.

Plate LX.

Ambrose MacEvoy

MERELY from the point of view of brush-drawing this would be a remarkable picture. It is done in a style that might almost be called "calligraphic," as if the artist had written his impressions; and yet nothing is lost of the delicacy of the model.

Plate LXI.

Eduardo Chicharro

"The Hunchback"

BOTH in subject and in treatment this picture is thoroughly characteristic of Spain. Velazquez was fond of painting dwarfs, and to his influence may be attributed the breadth of arrangement and handling. The absorption of the figures in the music gives emotional unity to the scene.

Plate LXII.

Frank Potter

"The Monument, Early Morning"

THE value of silhouettes is here thoroughly appreciated. It records a moment in which the buildings of London become a frame to a sky of almost unbearable purity. At such a moment the Monument seems to symbolize the dignity of commerce, and to be a monitor.

Plate LXIII.

Ignacio Zuloaga

IN its gravity and restrained wildness this picture might almost be called "The Soul of Spain." The gipsy type accords well with the untamed character of the landscape. Everything is very still, but with the suggestion of volcanic forces below.

Plate LXIV.

the portrait." This characterises Whistler's attitude towards his art perfectly, and is its justification and at the same time a judgment pronounced upon it. One must remember that at the Ruskin trial Whistler had explained, referring in particular to his exhibits: "All these works are impressions of my own. I make them my study. I suppose them to appeal to none but those who may understand the technical matter." With Whistler art had become self-purpose. In other words, he found it impossible to unite the inner necessity of meaning with the inner necessity of manner; and as he put his art before all he would sacrifice "imitation" where imitation is essential. Neither the pattern of his mother's portrait nor that of Carlyle's helps to explain the personality of his sitters—as, for example, the pattern of Hals's "Warrior," Velasquez' "Del Burro," or Rodin's "Balzac" helps to explain the personality of their originals. The very fact that he did not feel the incongruity of calling his mother's portrait an "arrangement" shows that he was unconscious of an inner necessity—outside art.

The portrait was not the *raison d'être* of his portraiture. Then why paint portraits? Why not make a "poem" out of stuff that is more pliable, and would consequently yield a still more "poetic" result? In the case of the nocturnes and variations Whistler had adopted certain Japanese ideas, but he did not realise that the Japanese use of pattern is in strict opposition to his own use of tone in the atmospheric sense. Atmosphere is like incense; it envelops our mind and leads it away into distances of expectation or remembrance, and so induces always a passive quality of mind in the spectator. Pattern *saute aux yeux* is essentially the here and now. One can recreate by pattern almost any state of the mind that is definite, because pattern itself is the essence of definition. Whoever looks at Whistler's "nocturnes" with an unbiased mind will realise that the Japanese pattern-element with which he invested some of them is always a hindrance to the very condition of mind which he wished to evoke. The little marginal sprigs of foliage seem irrelevantly playful, the Whistlerian "butterfly-monogram" an intrusion that no one would have more resented than the artist himself had it been another's. The very form of Japanese composition which allows the interest of the subject to be divided so that one part appears near the top and the other part near the bottom margin is incompatible with *atmospheric* vision. The Japanese picture has no *cubic* measure, and consequently no *weight*. The Japanese artist can therefore suspend his composition from the top, and allow it to lose itself before it reaches the bottom, or find itself again, as he chooses. Our European method of composition—the famous "pyramid" proves it—is always felt as an actual structure resting on its base. Whistler was at cross-purposes with his own formula, and accordingly his greatness speaks more clearly in such pictures as "The Little Rose of Lyme Regis" and "The Thames in Ice," because they show a greater unity of means and aims than any of the subjects consciously created *à la Japonaise*. Their inner balance is unspoilt.

It was necessary to devote somewhat more space to the consideration of Whistler's attitude because he is largely, albeit quite innocently, responsible for the mass of poor, unfledged art with which exhibitions have since been filled. Whistler, far from being a *Primitive Methodist*, was nevertheless a keen *Protestant*, a reformer of the old faith in *beauty*. His slightness, so much complained of as lack of finish during his lifetime, was not due to lack of knowledge; it was at worst occasionally a perhaps mistaken method of protest. His emphasis on the poetry of his art—*toujours la poésie*—gave rise to the "greenery-yallery Grosvenor Gallery" æstheticism, and helped, by way of reaction, to create a school of painting which emphasised everything that was loud, and startling, and ugly—*jamais la poésie*—borrowing from his spirit merely the audacity.

But why should art be always poetry, or why should it never be poetry? The conception of art as a unity is as much mistaken as a similar conception of literature, or music for that matter. Art, music and literature are means of communicating ideas. As the world of ideas is infinite, so also must their vehicles be infinite. Literature, art, and even music, may be used for all sorts of purposes. Even music: a bugle-call is a mere communication; a hymn is intended to bow the soul in prayer; a waltz is the decoration of love's ante-chamber; an opera is a romance intensified; a symphony is the soul of a story; in short, a piece of music that were nothing but music were sound signifying nothing. So also is art for art's sake. Art is a means to an end, and not an end in itself. To concentrate on means with neglect of purpose is a futility only possible in art, because its practice involves a craftsmanship incomparably more difficult, and therefore fascinating, than the mere craftsmanship of word or note writing. The poet may write—

"How green the grass is all around,"

and in these few words "paint" the milieu of an emotion. The painter essaying to picture "how green the grass is all around" is tempted to become more interested in the plot of grass than in the plot of emotion.

It is true that music may also be composed mainly for the purpose of surmounting *technical* difficulties, but no composer can win lasting fame by the exhibition of his technique, whereas the painter can send up his "plot of grass" and be sure of praise from critics on account of his marvellous capacity for painting "greens."

It is against this tendency that the keenest of the moderns are revolting. It is against the misuse of craftsmanship that their crudities are directed; it is their manner of protest. The danger of every protest, however, is that one may protest too much, thus forgetting the end in the battle of means. Craftsmanship in itself is of no value whatever; as a means to an end it is invaluable. What the majority of modern artists do not yet realise is this fundamental fact. They are still too fresh from the "conquest of the air" to appreciate the freedom it has won for art. They will eventually realise that it does not matter in what manner a thing is painted if it is the right, the fit manner for the purpose. They will change their manner according to their *subject*, as some of them already do. Shakespeare did not paint every play with the same palette, nor every character with the same brush. We must have a much finer, a much more sensitive art than we have at present, an art of much higher "conscious intelligence." Camille Mauclair was still able to say: "With Corot the great principle of modern landscape painting is established; the atmosphere becomes the essential and logical theme." As a matter of fact atmosphere is not a theme; it is a milieu, and not the *cause* of Corot's poetry. Corot sometimes, by no means always, chose to paint poetry. For these poems he used delicate atmospheric effects as a means towards an end. But it is the composition together with the *atmosphere* which gives these pictures their poetic rhythm, and the little unhappy nymphs have danced into his canvases straight from Claude's "heroic" scenery. Mauclair was speaking truly enough for his time, only we have now come to feel that to paint atmosphere as a "theme" is to serve salt as the *theme* of an omelette. It may be objected, however, that atmosphere *is* beautiful, and worth painting as such; but there: nothing in the world is in itself beautiful to *human* eyes, nor, for that matter, ugly. Ugliness and beauty owe their qualities to association. Beauty, however, is not aggressive, whilst ugliness is always offensive; it "rubs us up the wrong way." That of course is no reason why ugliness should be excluded as such from art. Its use gives the artist increased dramatic powers. The only thing he should avoid is to be "ugly" without need, which is necessarily always more objectionable than the almost

equally reprehensible habit of being "beautiful" without need. Both are sins against inner necessity, committed by old and modern painters alike. Old masters tended to make terrible or solemn subjects ridiculous to our minds by insistence on some trivial ugliness of action that sounded an unwanted note of truth where all else was "beautiful" or "sublime" artificiality; compare, for instance, Poussin's "The Plague amongst the Philistines at Ashdod," in the National Gallery.

Most of those painters who consider themselves truly modern seem as afraid of prettiness and beauty as if they were symptoms of the very plague itself. There are no restrictions imposed upon the artist, except the restrictions of inner necessity. Prettiness and detail-finish are in themselves no more blameworthy than coarseness and ugliness; all that matters is the inner harmony of truth. Chaucer's lines which portray "The Prioresse" are realistically, even prosaically, minute to an almost incredible degree—

> "Hir over lippe wyped she so clene
> That in her coppe was no ferthing sene
> Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draught..."

—a description of Madame Eglantine done with Flaubert's microscopic realism, and yet the unity of aims and means was so perfect in Chaucer that he was able to paint her *personality* as it were with one dash of the pencil—

> "And al was conscience and tendre herte."

That is art. We want to see art freed from all arbitrary restrictions, and we want the artist to learn how to express himself in different manners according to the necessity of his subject. We want to have pictures that will represent meanings and not mannerism. Let us have landscapes that are views, or descriptions, or impressions, or elegies, or compositions; let us have portraits that are either pure prose, or lyric poems, or obviously paraphrases of personalities, or character-studies, or, frankly, caricatures. Let us have subjects with literary interest or with archæological interest, stated in good prose instead of bad poetry. Let us, too, have "eye-gays" as we have nosegays. Why not? Let us have any of the "isms," even "cubism," when they intensify the meaning; but we do not want "isms" for their own sake. We must cease from the pernicious habit of subordinating every picture to æsthetic fashions, from demanding that every picture, *no matter what the subject*, should be decorative, *and* poetic, *and* beautiful, and *real*, and *modern*. If that were done we should be spared the incongruities of our present style of criticism, which is generally devoted to the *manner*, the technique, in which a picture is painted. As the critique is intended for the benefit of the public, questions of technique are quite irrelevant. The public are less entitled to learn the technical details of picture-making than the technical details of "tank" or torpedo construction. Our technical criticism is a survival of the "dilettante" and connoisseur's habit. The public have no business behind the scenes. Shakespeare did not write for professors of literature.

The war has imposed on every nation throughout the world new problems of economy, and it is to be anticipated that the future will sweep away most of the unwonted exhibition *poems* (over two thousand annually alone at Burlington House). The artist will have to justify his existence. But how can he do so unless he can prove that his work is of *national importance?* The stage-painter, the poster-artist, the social caricaturist and satirist, and the comic illustrator, all have their justification in the economy of the nation, though it is an astonishing thing that Hogarth's country should be so poorly represented in critical art.

We have had our Rowlandsons and Leechs, and Keenes and Phil Mays, but social criticism has died out. The illustrators of *Punch* and nearly all their contemporaries still take art literally. They have no language of their own like Daumier, or Steinlen, or Forain, or Gulbranson, or so many other continental *cartoonists*,

whose very pencils are steepéd in satire and imagination. Our cartoonists must we read before we can understand. Our most successful illustrators are Bairnsfather, who combines little art with much humour, and Heath Robinson, who is inclined to reverse the process. We have, with the possible exception of Dyson and a few "Anons." in unpopular papers, no equivalent to Raemaekers, politically, and our best caricaturists have foreign blood, such as the late Ospovat and the ever-amusingly intellectual "Max." In these two of the most vital branches of art there is plenty of room at the top, but it needs men not only with ideas on life, but also on art. We could do with a few pictorial Shaws and Chestertons, and can only lament that Belloc is not an artist.

As regards the poster, that new and extremely hopeful invention of the present, we are more fortunate. We have at least Brangwyn and Spencer Pryse, and a few others. Nor should we forget the splendid pioneer work done by the "Brothers Beggarstaff."

In the poster and the cartoon there is probably more vitality, more promise for the future, than in any other branch of art, except one, and that is decoration. Since the year of the Great Exhibition and the writings of Ruskin and Morris, decoration has received virtually a new significance. In former times it served to glorify the wealth of the Church or of princes, of aristocrats and patricians. Its connection with wealth is therefore old; its relation to the commonwealth is new, and newer still is the recognition of its bearing upon common health and common happiness. By now the vast majority of the public have become accustomed to decorative schemes (their quality is another question) in their homes, in the streets, in public buildings; and though they may scarcely notice their presence, they would immediately become aware of their absence. The business of the artist-decorator is, however, not only to add more to the already existing schemes and details of decoration, but—making, as some of them recommend, a virtue of their craftsmanship failings—once again, as in the other branches of art, to produce a greater harmony between aims and means. Stage-craft has taught us the emotional significance of "interior decoration"; has indeed opened up possibilities that were never thought of before. The new method of building has further improved the possibilities of the decorator, so that we may say that so far as decoration is concerned the artist has chances which former ages could not dream of. When the world, after the war, has regained its equilibrium, there will be a demand for the decorator; a demand which we here in England will scarcely be able to meet, so little encouragement has been and is given to the decorative arts.* This is as regrettable as it is surprising, in view of the fact that it was England that gave the original impetus to the decorative art movement of the whole world. There is no country like England for *independent* thought in every branch of life; even the little Arts and Crafts Exhibition at Burlington House proved this. But we appear to be lacking in the capacity for concerted action and common enthusiasms. Morris vainly tried to kindle them to a flame, not so much in the people as the *consumers*, but in them as the *producers*. Hence his ideas fell on more fertile soil on the Continent, where the people are accustomed to common (*i.e.*, State or Municipal) action more than we. Morris's mind seems, however, to have had one great fault: it was academic; it *preached* art as a faith, sought to influence life by reforming art. Much of his truth was therefore wasted. It is, however lamentable, still a fact that all progress, all evolution in the sense of improvement, depends on purely rational development. Irrational faith may help the individual over his own momentary difficulties, but it never helps society; on the contrary, time and again it has

* It must, however, be acknowledged that the War Government has had the good sense not only to employ "Camouflage Artists," but also to commission artists to record their impressions of the fighting and the fighters, *e.g.*, Muirhead Bone and Francis Dodd.

let society down. Man is solitary only in his pain; he is social always in his joy. Decorative art is essentially joy. It is not a virtue; it is a necessity that always exists, however poor and false its complexion. Morris seemed to want to impose art as a duty upon the *producer.* Art as a duty is like morality under compulsion. Duty, the brazen-faced hypocrite, is a word that should be erased from the dictionary of thought. We must learn to act finely in life as well as in art from a sense of joy, of pleasure—*car tel est notre plaisir.* But how can one expect a worker to take pleasure in his work if it is wrought for a wage and not for his own benefit? The days of Corin are over: "Sir, I am a true labourer; I earn that I get, get that I wear, owe no man hate, envy no man's happiness, glad of other men's good, content with my harm, and the greatest of my pride is to see my ewes graze and my lambs suck." The sting is in the "my"; Corin now wants to own the lambs he tends. And should he not?

If we look around to see where modern decoration finds its most vital expression, we discover indeed that it belongs to public places frequented by near relations to Corin; to the buildings that serve the workers, from the large "store" to the "popular restaurant," from the banks and shipping-offices to the theatres and cinemas, from the town-halls to the garden-cities. The patronage of Church and princes is fast disappearing; even the merchant-princes prefer to surround themselves with ready-made second-hand glory.

Here, then, is the decorator's chance. In the days of "pomp and circumstance" the decorator was bound to express riches. His duties were limited to a service of gorgeousness, from the Byzantine Basilica to the palace of Versailles. It was not until the eighteenth century that a subtler psychological function was introduced into the art of decoration. The ancient decorator's duty was to introduce as much carving or gilt ornament, and to paint his wall-pictures as realistically as possible, no matter how allegorical or symbolical his subjects. Indeed, even Morris's and Burne-Jones's decorative notions were based on *meaning* rather than *effect;* they preferred designs because they belonged to the Quattrocento; because they were suitable to their temperament rather than to their age. Morris's Pipeshop in his literary picture of the future resembles Sir Oliver Lodge's "spiritual" cigars; both are signs of the mental economy of puzzled thinkers anxious to make "both ends meet," the knowable with the unknowable. Such signs are never wanting where faith, busy with past or future, neglecting the here and now, rules over reason. The modern decorator's conscious intelligence tends to make him consider the needs of the now, to concentrate on the inner necessity of the task immediately before him. A much subtler psychological interest is demanded of him than mere imitation or adaptation of the past. He must not only have a subject in keeping with the purpose of the building, and these purposes are far more various in these days than they have ever been before; he must carry out his design, composition, and colour-scheme in *psychological* harmony with the professed purpose of the building. The marvellous development of stage-craft, which to some extent replaces the function of art formerly filled by pageantry and masks, has substantially helped to make the existence of such a necessity clear. It is no longer a question of painting an easel-picture on a wall, such as may be seen in the decorations of the Royal Exchange, where only one or perhaps two are in themselves (if that is possible) *mural decorations,* but of inventing a scheme in harmony with the architecture and its purpose. As yet we can only see the beginnings of such an awakening of conscious intelligence. In Brangwyn's work, for example, and in the theatre and restaurant architecture and decoration on the Continent, and even in the laudable, if ridiculous, attempts at the Borough Polytechnic.

The decorator's craft is thus the noblest and possibly the most vital branch, as it is certainly the most difficult, of all art. Photography might conceivably take the place of portrait-painting; historical subjects, and even poetical easel-picture painting, may conceivably be superseded by the arts of literature;* Keats is an arguable substitute for Burne-Jones, and Wordsworth for Constable; but there is no other art that could take the place of decoration, which properly understood includes all the arts without exception. The true decorator should not only be architect and sculptor, he should be the poet of line and form, of light and colour, and able to put his genius into the service of use, than which there can be no harder discipline. Whistler, who did not possess that discipline, bent decoration to the service of poetry; he made Leland's "peacock-room" an apotheosis of his own picture-poetry, cutting up in the process beautiful oriental carpets and Spanish leather, but leaving the architecture, which was admittedly "far from beautiful," untouched—a truly amazing compromise in one whose whole life was dedicated to art *without* compromise. The true compromise would have been to adapt his painting to the architecture, such as he found it, or to refuse the job. Yet for all that it was one of the first examples of a modern artist carrying out a scheme of decoration on a psychological basis, *i.e.*, without reference to purely academico-historic ornamentation.

The possibilities of decoration have indeed as yet scarcely been tapped—its most glorious future is assuredly still before it. What is true of this one branch of art is presumably true of the others, even though not all of them may survive in the forms we are at present accustomed to.

In the past art happened; in the future it will be wrought with conscious intelligence. Instead of the present chaos and welter of conflicting ideas, in which it is difficult to distinguish between means and meanings, artists will obey laws which will regulate expression without imposing fetters upon its real freedom, as the "rule of the road" regulates traffic, in the interests of communication. What at present is wrong with art is, as the foregoing pages tried to point out, the aimless seeking after new means and old meanings. Whilst the old-fashioned artist clings to his particular "ism" from want of imagination or sheer inertia, the most "advanced" artist invents some new "ism" after the example of the Teuton, who evolved a sublime camel out of his inner consciousness.

When all is said, art is either a trade or profession, like the plumber's and carpenter's or the reporter's and journalist's; or it is a vocation like the poet's. The trade or profession can be taught, learnt, acquired with more or less success by any one—the vocation is a calling, which only those who have been "called" can practise with success. But they have to pass through the hardest school of all; they must, with every fibre of their body, with every vibration of their soul, live life and love life.

So we come to the very trite, the very threadbare, the very outworn conclusion that love, and love only, matters.

Says Cennino Cennini in his second chapter: "There are some who follow the arts from poverty and necessity, also for gain and for love of the art; but those who pursue them from love of the art and true nobleness of mind are to be commended above all others."

Says Tolstoy: "The destiny of art in our time is to transmit from the realm of reason to the realm of feeling the truth that well-being for men consists in being united together, and to set up, in place of the existing reign of force, that Kingdom of God, *i.e.*, love, which we all recognise to be the highest aim of human life."

The world after the war will become more than ever conscious that the greatest question in the

* "Literature, a growth that has now overshadowed the fine arts, and seems as if it might in time almost supplant them."—H. G. SPEARING, M.A., *The Childhood of Art*.

world for the whole of humanity is the question of economy; and because we are only just beginning to realise that the "oikos" of humanity is the whole world. The perfect adjustment of means and ends, which is, and always has been, the great problem of all life and of all art, will be pursued with ever-increasing *conscious intelligence*, to repeat William Morris's phrase once more, because it is to him and Ruskin principally that we owe the knowledge of the intimate connection between social art and social welfare.

Nothing could have brought home to us the interdependence of all things human like this war, and nothing could have helped so much as this tremendous universal sacrifice to confirm the majority in their claim to share in the good things of life. There will be a universal desire to improve the *quality* of life, and that cannot fail to bring about an improvement in the quality of art.

New scales are even now in the making, new weights will, without a doubt, be found.

Frank Brangwyn, A.R.A.

"Cannon Street Station"

THIS is "London," essentially. The grimy grandeur of the scene is enhanced by strong contrasts of light and shade, and the little figures own the power of the tyrant city. Relief is given by the serene space of sky above the bridge.

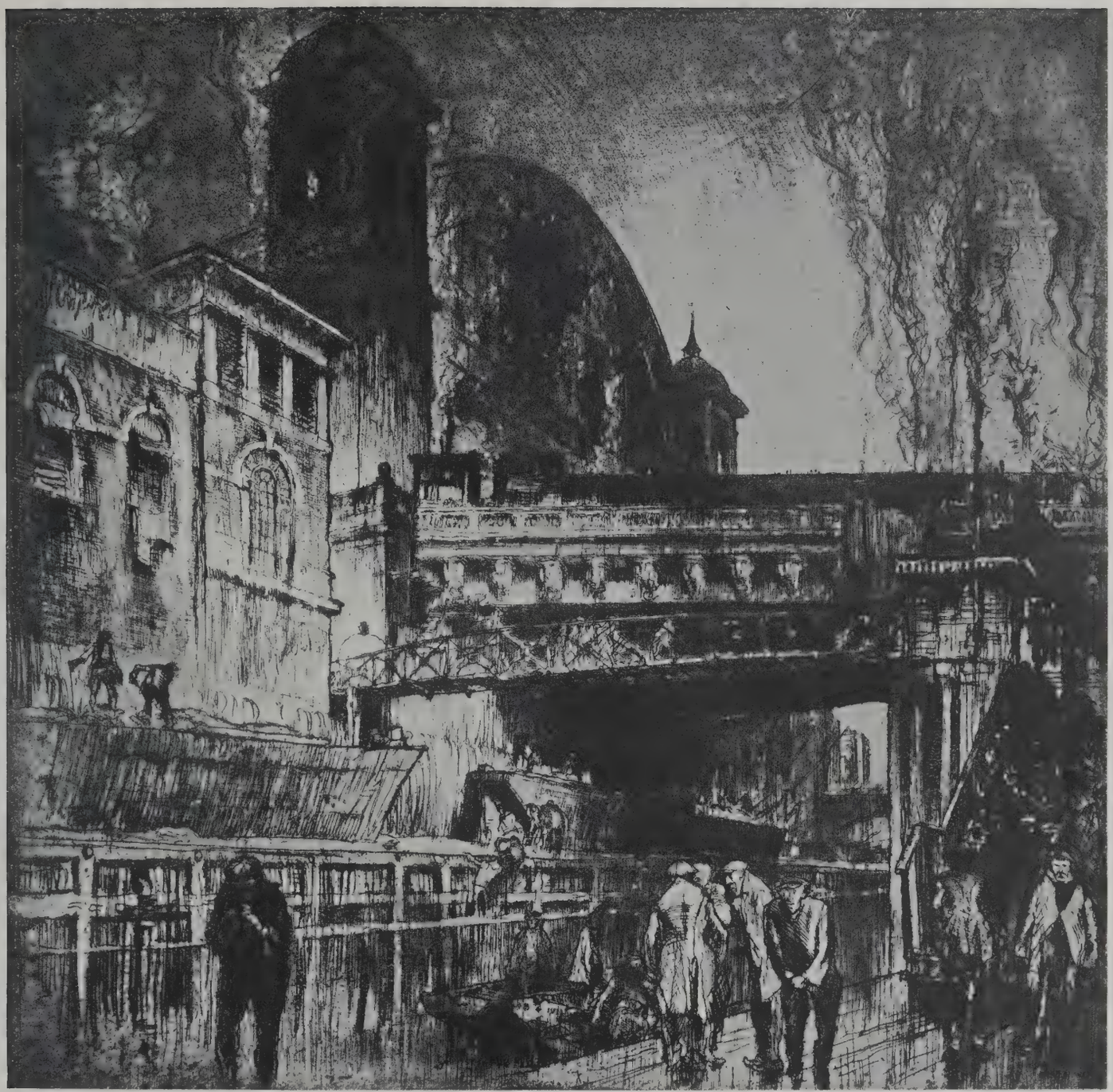

Plate LXV.

Charles H. Shannon, A.R.A.

"The Morning Toilet"

THE dangerous facility of lithography is here controlled by a sense of beauty and a sense of style. Even in black-and-white the rosy bloom of the nude body is suggested, as well as the quality of morning light.

Plate LXVI.

Will Dyson

**"They were promised the earth,
and are given potato tickets"**

DRAWN with the savage intensity of the born propagandist, whose pencil is a weapon. It is all the more impressive for lack of violent action, the effect being that of the lowering hush before the tempest.

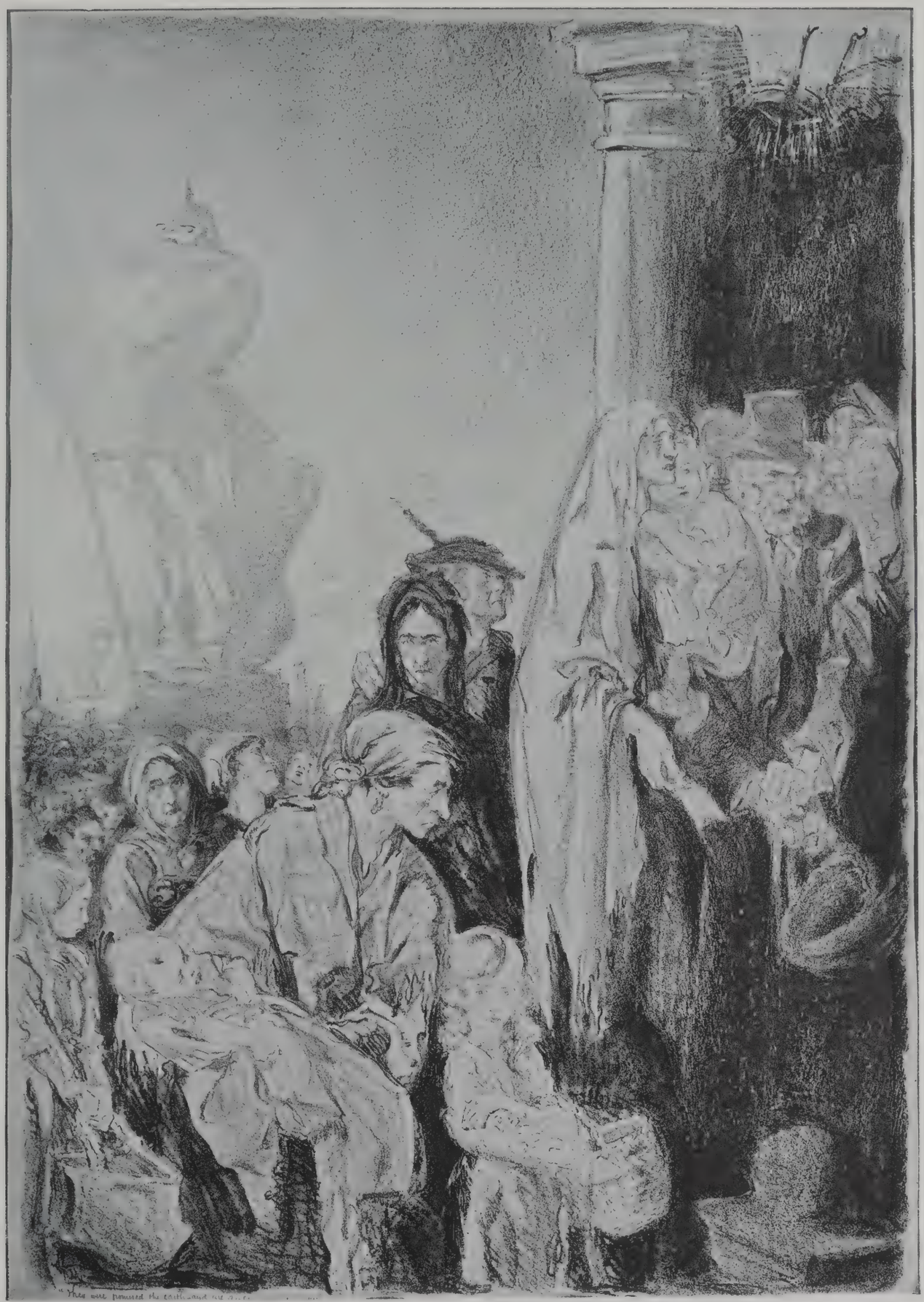

Plate LXVII.

Marc Henry Meunier

"The Chapel on the Wayside"

A FINE example of decorative realism, recalling the more poetical of the pre-Raphaelites—Rossetti, for example—in the significance given to inanimate objects. All minor accidents of contour are eliminated, and the technique has a decorative value of its own.

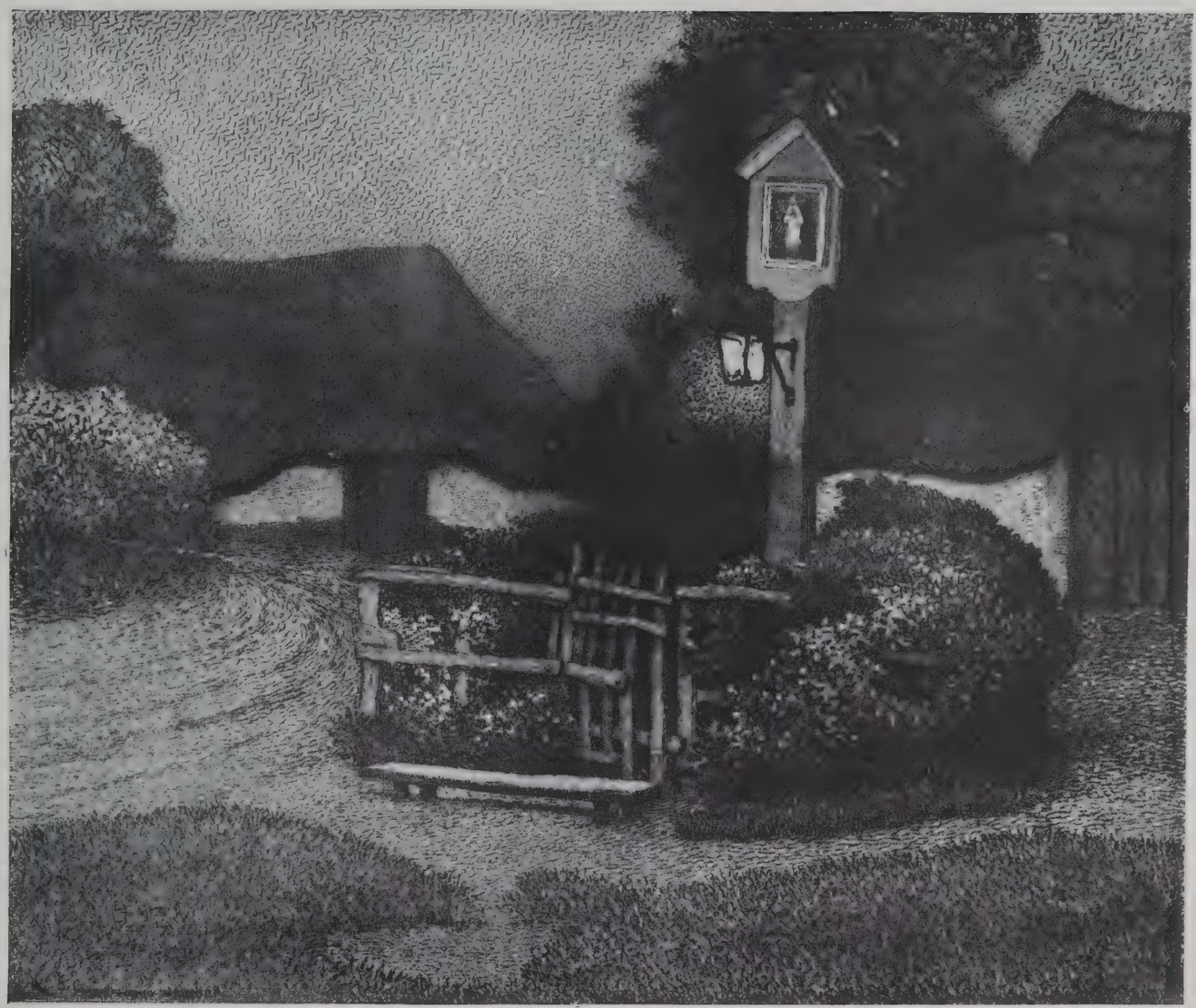

Plate LXVIII.

Hippolyte Daeye

"Portrait of Child"

CHARMING on account of the great sympathy with which the medium—apparently charcoal—is handled. It is as if the artist were breathlessly eager to reproduce in his drawing the flower-like fragility of the model.

Plate LXIX.

G. Covelli

"The Toilet"

A CLEVER study in artificial lighting, the subject being attractive by reason of its objective treatment. It is a note on "worldliness" by an amused but not unsympathetic observer.

Plate LXX.

William Orpen, A.R.A.

"Kit"

IN its tact and economy, while giving a purely descriptive as distinct from an expressive rendering of the subject, this drawing recalls the work of Watteau. The frank "standing to be drawn" attitude of the model is in itself an attraction.

Plate LXXI.

Ettore Tito

"Autunno"

BY a Venetian painter famous for the silvery quality of his aerial effects—apparent even in reproduction. Equally evident is a command of decorative design, in an easy, naturalistic manner.

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